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the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased by 50% (Mental Health Foundation 2000). The prevalence of mental health problems has increased in the general population, and the incidence of mental health problems has increased in the prison population.

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the mental health needs of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

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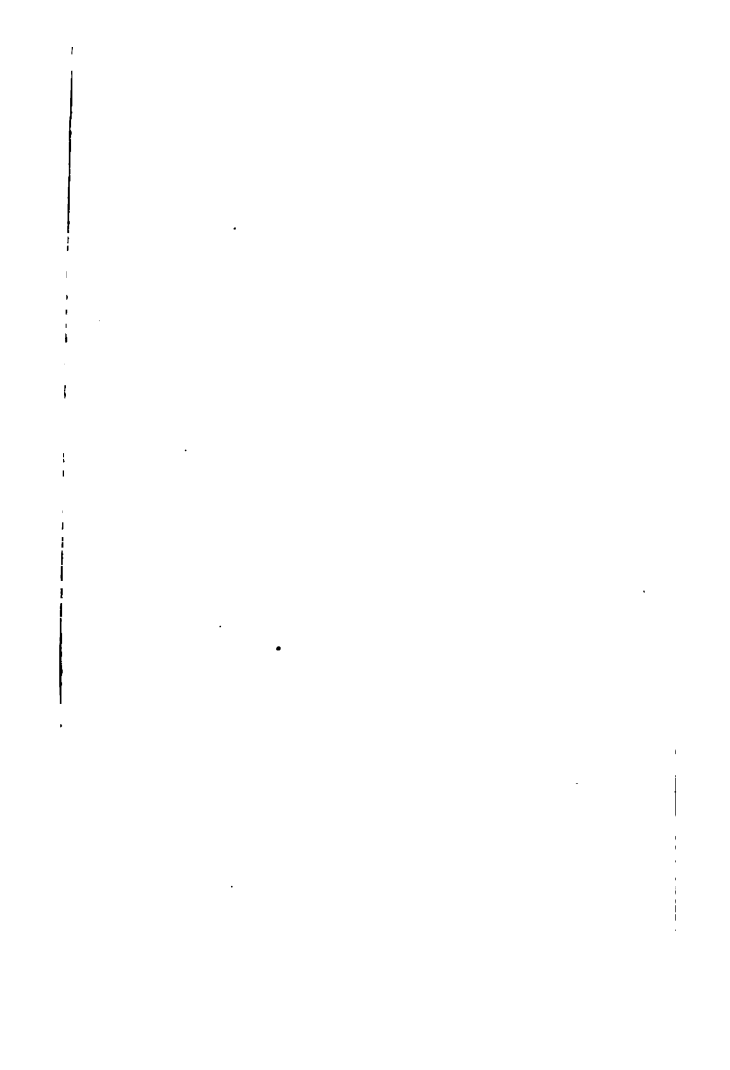
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JESUS CHRIST.

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JESUS CHRIST.

A

REPLY TO M. RENAN.

BY

A. GRATRY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

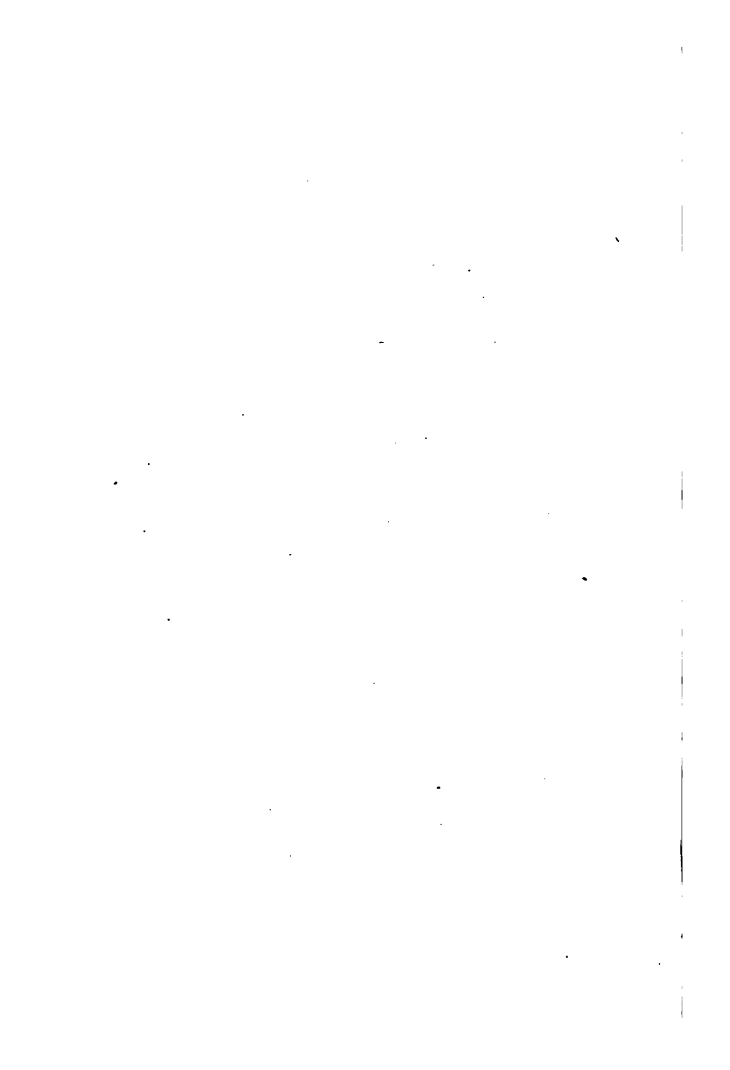


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PREFACE.

Most Catholics are aware that, in these our times, some writers of false pretensions, aided by a few professional critics, have formed an association, with the avowed purpose of undermining the general belief in the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As long as the circulation of their works was confined to the educated classes, I was satisfied with opposing the evidence of facts to their vain suggestions. I proved, as others had already proved, that their assertions were false, their so-called science a mockery, and their design a most reprehensible one.

But one of these writers—M. Renan—having now made an attempt to extend the circulation of his work—“*The Life of Jesus*”—and, by introducing it into the dwellings and factories of the working-classes, to disseminate his impious doc-

trines throughout the land, I have once more taken up my pen, and have determined, with the Divine help, to follow him into the homes of the poor, and to offer to my countrymen a popular edition of the scientific work, written some time since for the purpose of showing the fallacy of his theories.*

These theories, already refuted throughout Europe, by the arguments of science, must now be finally and universally condemned by the voice of common sense. For the verdict of the people is the voice of common sense; and I do not fear to appeal, in this discussion, to the judgment of every man who knows how to read.

"Come to me all you who labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

Eighteen hundred years have elapsed since these words were spoken.

If, during this long period, there has been any virtue on earth, or any happiness in life—if pure, holy, and devoted souls have accomplished any small amount of good for their fellow-creatures—if un-

* *Les Sophistes et la Critique.*

lawful power has been in any degree restrained—and if the poor and the weak have been enabled partially to ameliorate their condition, we owe it to the Gospel—we owe it to our Lord Jesus Christ !

Our fate is still a hard one, but let us compare our actual condition with that of mankind before the coming of our Saviour. Then, the workman was a slave—his labour belonged to his master ; and that master possessed over him the power of life and death. What a fearful state of things was this !

We must recollect to whose teaching we owe the advance in moral civilization—the revolution of thought and feeling—which formed an epoch in the world's history, and placed a wide gulf of separation between the old world and the new. For the Founder of the new order of things was no other than our Lord Jesus Christ ! Friends ! When troubles weigh heavily on you, and tears dim your eyes, you think of Christ on the cross. To His merciful protection you commend your wife, your infant child, your innocent young daughter. You lay His crucified image on the breast of your dying parent

—you place it over the graves of those you love—and when, after years of absence, you return to your native land, your first reverent salutation is offered to the cross, which you see from afar on the spire of your village church.

These writers of the present day will tell you that Jesus—your God—your Friend—your Hope—your Model—was but a human being like yourselves—that He has vanished from the earth—that He does not hear your prayers—and that His words remain but to deceive and mislead you.

They seek to tear the crucifix from your walls, and the tabernacle from your altars. They endeavour to deprive you of the consolations of faith, and to eradicate from the hearts of your children, not only every feeling of religion, but even every sentiment of filial piety.

And they who have undertaken this iniquitous task—these learned professors—these wise doctors—these clever critics—who will yet have to render an account of their impious work before God and man—they point to the ministers of religion, and say to you, “Look at these priests,

who, in order to devote themselves to the salvation of men, have renounced honours, riches, ambition, and kindred. They are hypocrites ! But we, who have sought and gained wealth and power, renown and happiness, we are the successors of the early Christians. We are the true apostles — the virtuous teachers — the guides appointed to lead you in the paths of progress.

“ We bring you a new Gospel, and the first article of faith which we propose to you is this : You must henceforth *believe nothing !* ”

Brothers ! Men of the working classes, who have neither time nor opportunity for deep study, I tell you that these men deceive you infamously, that they flatter you most grossly.

In order to understand this, read the book that I now place in your hands, and judge for yourselves. It will at least suffice to open your eyes to their deceit. As to their flattery, listen now to the truth from me.

They tell you that you are better than others. This is not the case. Virtue is not confined to a particular class, neither,

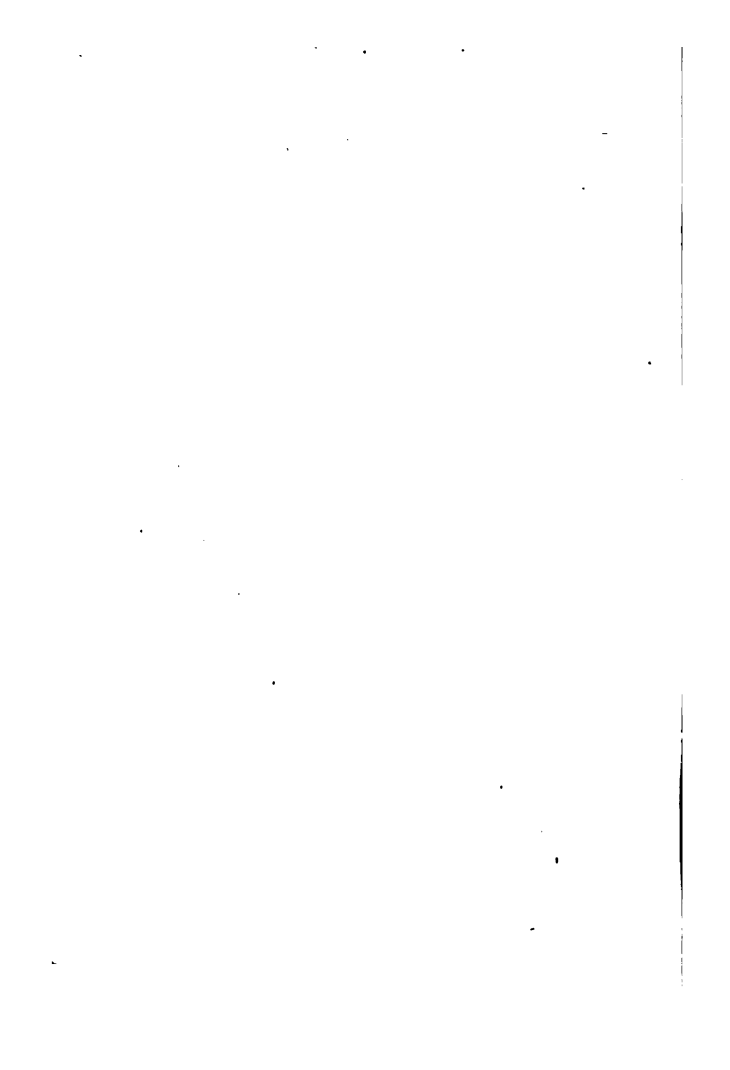
thank Heaven, are right and duty, at least in our days. We are all poor miserable creatures, who need to love one another, to forgive one another, to assist and sustain one another. This it is which Jesus Christ, the Divine Teacher of the New Law, inculcates in His Gospel. This it is which, difficult as it may be, and yet essential to our salvation, He assists and teaches us, by the aid of His living grace, to put in practice.

Let nothing, then, ever break the bond which unites us to Jesus Christ, our true Friend and Guide. Let us not permit a false Gospel to circulate amongst us. And may the Spirit of Christ be always with us, that His Sacred Heart burning with zeal for our salvation, may ever find a secure resting-place in the hearts of His faithful upon earth!

A. GRATRY, O. I. C.

PART I.

ON THE FALSE PORTRAIT OF OUR LORD.



JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

ON TEN ERRORS.

I.

I have undertaken to treat of "The Life of Jesus," by M. Renan.

Without further introduction, I take this false book in hand, in order to show, in the first instance, the amount of falsehood that it contains.

Having once placed it before my readers in its true light, I shall proceed to express my opinion of its merits.

I mean to begin by enumerating some of its most striking errors—those concerning which there can be no ground for dispute. The mere statement of these errors must suffice to destroy the work in the estimation of any candid critic.

A quarter of an hour's careful study,

with the assistance of any one already familiar with the book, must lead to its condemnation. There can be no difficulty in comprehending what follows.

The author of "*The Life of Jesus*" maintains that our Lord Jesus Christ is not God.

One of the arguments on which he grounds his assertion is this: "In three of the four Gospels," he says, "Jesus does not even assume the title of Son of God."

Therefore, far from calling Himself God, He does not, according to M. Renan, even call Himself the Son of God. St. John alone falsely represents Him as assuming that title.

I will give you the author's own words. "It is only in the Gospel of John that Jesus uses the expression *Son of God*, or *Son*, in speaking of Himself."*

Now this is absolutely false. I will show you that Jesus Christ declares Himself the *Son of God*, or *the Son*, in the most solemn manner, in each of the four Gospels.

* *Vie de Jésus*. Page 245. Note 2.

We will look at the three first, in which, according to M. Renan, Jesus does not "use the expression, *Son of God*, or *Son*, in speaking of Himself."

Let us begin with the Gospel of St. Matthew.

"All things are delivered to Me by My Father. And no one knoweth the Son but the Father. And no one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him." Matt. xi. 27.

Does not Our Lord here call Himself the Son of God? Are not His words sufficiently solemn? He speaks of Himself as *the Son*, and even as *the only Son* of God.

Let us look again at St. Matthew.

"I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said it." Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.

Does this reply appear unsatisfactory? Turn to the Gospel of St. Mark, and you will find it explained.

"Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed God? And Jesus said to him: I am." Mark xiv. 61, 62.

Again, in St. Luke we find :

"Art thou then the Son of God? Who said: You say that I am. And they said: What need we any farther testimony? For we ourselves have heard it from His own mouth." Luke xxii. 70, 71.

Reader, these are the words of Our Lord Himself, as recorded, not only by St. John, but by St. Luke, St. Mark, and St. Matthew.

Jesus, in each of the four Gospels, distinctly declares Himself the Son of God.

What do you think of this? What *can* you think of an author who, writing on the most momentous of all questions, dares to assert a palpable falsehood—a falsehood which can be proved such at any moment by a reference to those texts of Holy Scripture which are familiar to every man of even ordinary education throughout the civilized world?

The author must assuredly be as well acquainted with these texts as we are.

Nevertheless he says: "It is only in the Gospel of John that Jesus uses the expression *Son of God*, or *Son*, in speaking of Himself."

Judge for yourselves. What must be

your opinion of a writer who makes such a groundless assertion? And if he thus writes on the Gospel, which is, doubtless, as familiar to him as he knows it to be to his readers—rather, as we must suppose, through inadvertence than through any want of candour, can you not estimate at their true value his quotations from other sources?

Observe also, as a characteristic feature of the book, that whether the author lays down a proposition, or asserts its converse, he is, in either case, equally entitled to belief. When he affirms any thing with certainty, you may expect to find him stating the contrary in some other part of the book. Examine it carefully, and you will perceive that it is so.

In the passage now before me, he says: "The title of Son of God, which he openly assumed in striking parables, wherein his enemies appeared as murderers of the heavenly messengers, &c."*

You may imagine here that the author is about to cite St. John alone, as it is, he says, only in St. John that Jesus

assumes the title of Son of God. But no—he cites, in the margin, first St. John, in whose Gospel no mention is made of the parable in question, and then St. Matthew, who does, in fact, record it. He does not, however, cite either St. Luke or St. Mark, although we find the parable in both these Gospels.*

From this I conclude that a quarter of an hour's study would suffice to destroy, by this example, or by others of a similar nature, the value of M. Renan's testimony in the judgment of any person of unprejudiced mind.

To ascertain if a man has wholly lost the sense of vision, it is sufficient to hold up three fingers for his inspection. If he maintains that only one has been raised, the question is at once set at rest. A single proof has clearly manifested his blindness. Although Our Divine Lord distinctly declares Himself the Son of God in each of the four Gospels, M. Renan says that the statement can be found but in one. This is an example of the style in which he uniformly views

* Matt. xxi. 33. Luke xx. 9. Mark xii. 1.

the texts whereon he pretends to base his assertions.

How are we to deal with a volume thus filled with misrepresentations? How enumerate and discuss the errors which constitute its groundwork? It would be simply impossible. I will therefore limit myself to ten examples, leaving it to those who wish to study the volume to discover the remainder for themselves.

II.

As the Gospel of St. John is that which treats most fully of the Divinity of Our Lord, the constant aim of the author is to separate this Gospel from those of the three other Evangelists. With this end in view, he says :

“Quite a new mystical language is introduced in the Gospel of John—a language of which the synoptics—that is to say, the three other Evangelists—had not the least idea. For example, *World, Truth, Life, Light, Darkness, &c.*”*

Would not any one imagine, on reading

these words, that M. Renan had some grounds for his assertion? Nevertheless, he has absolutely none.—All the words which he specifies are to be found in the three other Gospels, as well as in that of St. John. This I have myself verified. The words, *World, Life, Light, and Darkness*, are used in them clearly and precisely in the same mystical sense. The author could easily have ascertained this. The Sacred Text remains unchanged, and is within reach of all.

Take the concordance of the Bible. Seek these words, and ascertain, from the context, the sense in which they are used.

Call to mind the following well-known texts, which you will find in the synoptics—*“Children of this WORLD, and children of LIGHT.”* Luke xvi. 8.

“Woe to the WORLD, because of scandals.” Matt. xviii. 7.

“If thou wilt enter into LIFE, keep the commandments.” Matt. xix. 17.

“Cast him into the exterior DARKNESS.” Matt. xxii. 13.

“How narrow is the gate that leadeth to LIFE.” Matt. vii. 14.

“The people that sat in DARKNESS hath

• *seen great LIGHT: and to them that sat in the region of the shadow of DEATH, LIGHT is sprung up.*" Matt. iv. 16.

"*A LIGHT to the revelation of the Gentiles.*" Luke ii. 32.

In all these passages, we find the words, *Darkness* and *Light*—*World, Life,* and *Death*, used evidently in the same mystical sense as in the Gospel of St. John. Even in his Gospel, the word *Death* is not used in this sense, although we find it in his Epistles. On the other hand, he alone uses the word *Truth*. But why lay any stress on such accidents? The language is clearly the same in all. This should not surprise us; for it is a language that may be traced to Isaiah—the language of the Prophecies and of the Psalms—the eternal language of Divine poetry, confided to the people of God.

But M. Renan, seeing and comprehending nothing of this, pronounces judgment as decisively as if he had carefully weighed and studied the subject, and tells us, without hesitation, of *a new mystical language, of which the synoptics had not the least idea.*"

III.

We now come to an instance, in which "the impertinence of error," as Pascal calls it, manifests itself most obtrusively.

M. Renan says:

"Jesus had not the least notion of a soul apart from the body."*

Imagine this writer coming forward in calm superiority, to speak to us with a resolute decision unusual to him of those things of which JESUS CHRIST, the Eternal Master of the Universe, had not the least notion!

Jesus then "had not the least notion of a soul apart from the body."

Who dares make such an assertion, when any one of us may instantly reply: Our Lord has said: "*Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body into hell.*"† Where do we find these words? In the Gospel of St. Matthew, which M. Renan himself names as the sole authentic record of the discourses of Our Lord.

* Page 128.

† Matt. x. 28.

How, we may well ask, do such men undertake to argue? Under what delusion do they labour when making similar assertions? Does chance alone regulate their words, or can they be under the influence of some sort of irresistible instinct which impels them to speak? Their real design, or rather their blind instinct, is to sweep away all articles of faith—to teach that God, the soul, good, evil, truth and falsehood, are but so many vain imaginations.

The author, anxious to disprove the existence of the soul, fancies that he can add to the force of his argument by asserting that Jesus Christ recognised no distinction between soul and body, and forthwith he writes: "*Jesus had not the least notion of a soul apart from the body.*"

What does it signify to him that, before laying down his pen, he finds his assertion literally shivered to fragments by the text? His inexhaustible ingenuity suggests a new point of attack, and now we find him stating that "the individuality of man is identified with his material portion"—a proposition sufficient in itself

to demonstrate the incursion of barbarism into the intellectual world.

Let us proceed with the enumeration of some of the most glaring faults of this book.

IV.

Weigh well, I entreat, the following example of singular inconsistency. The author, discussing a point of serious import—the distinctive characteristics of one of the Gospels—says: “*Mark is pre-eminently the Evangelist of miracles and exorcisms.*”

Now, in the Introduction, we find: “*The Gospel of Mark is much firmer—more precise—containing fewer subsequent additions.*”

I will give these two passages at full length.

“Mark is pre-eminently the Evangelist of miracles and exorcisms. He insists so much on this point that if we were to trace the character of Christ only according to this Gospel, we should represent Him as an exorcist in possession of charms of rare efficacy—as a mighty

sorcerer, whose presence inspired fear, and whose influence the people were inclined to shun.”*

Let us now turn to the former passage—that which we find in the Introduction. “The Gospel of Mark is much firmer—more precise—containing fewer subsequent additions. He is the one of the three synoptics who has remained the most primitive—the most original, the one to whom the fewest after-elements have been added. In Mark, the facts are related with a clearness for which we seek in vain amongst the other Evangelists. He abounds in minute observations, coming doubtless from an eye-witness.”†

Reader, compare these two passages, and judge for yourself.

We must suppose that M. Renan, when writing this last passage in his Introduction, had forgotten the first, written six months previously.

Now, in what light did the author see his subject, when he pronounced the first of these opinions?

* Page 268.

† Page xxxviii.

And again, in what light did he see it when he pronounced the second?

The probability is that he never seriously examined it in any light.

We must therefore conclude that he wrote on a subject to which he had not given due consideration.

Intellectually speaking, he is then a false witness. This is doubtless the reason that we find him incessantly making conflicting statements—for false witnesses invariably contradict themselves.

V.

We come now to another example. At p. 327 I find these words:

“Now the Pharisees were the true Jews.”

But at page 347 I find the following:

“The Sadducees...were the true Jews.”

Now M. Renan knows, as well as we do, that the Pharisees and the Sadducees formed two totally different sects; the Pharisees being fanatics and the Sadducees unbelievers.

What view did he take of his subject,

when he said, *The Pharisees are the true Jews?*

And what view did he take of it when he wrote, *The true Jews.....are the Sadducees?*

The probability is that he wrote at random, that he wrote on a subject to which he had not given due consideration.

False witnesses testify to that which they have not seen, and invariably contradict themselves.

VI.

Again, where has M. Renan discovered any foundation for the following assertion?

"Even in marriage continence was recommended. This is the constant doctrine of Paul."*

Why make such a statement, when we read in St. Paul: "*Uxori vir debitum reddat, similiter autem et uxor viro. Mulier sui corporis potestatem non habet, sed vir.*" 1 Cor. vii. 3, 4.

Thus, the above is *not* the constant doctrine of St. Paul.

VII.

Of what is M. Renan thinking when he maintains, against the evidence of the Gospel, that baptism was but of secondary importance in the estimation of our Lord Jesus Christ ? *

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, according to M. Renan, the only exact and authentic record of the discourses of Jesus, we find Him saying :

"Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. xxviii. 19.

Again, in St. John, He says :

"Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 5.

And in St. Mark, baptism is plainly made the condition of salvation.

"He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." Mark xvi. 16.

VIII.

In what part of the Gospel has M. Renan found this doctrine ?

“Jesus suppresses all mediators between man and His Father.”*

Now Jesus says :

“*He that heareth you heareth Me ; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me : and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me.*” Luke x. 16. (See also Matt. xxviii. 19, and John xxi. 16, 17.)

Thus does our Lord speak in the Gospel. Nevertheless, M. Renan says :

“Jesus suppresses all mediators between man and his Father.”

This author undertakes, therefore, to write a history actually contradictory of the original documents whence it is derived, documents, be it remarked, which he himself recognises elsewhere as authentic, and from which he draws unsparingly when it suits his purpose to do so.

IX.

Compare the two following contradic-

tory opinions on the celebrated words of our Lord: "*Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's: and to God the things that are God's.*" Luke xx. 25; Matt. xxii. 21; Mark xii. 18.

In the first instance, M. Renan says:

"To establish as a principle that we must recognise the legitimacy of a power by the inscription on its coins—to proclaim that the perfect man pays tribute with scorn and without question, was to destroy republicanism in the ancient form, and to favour all tyranny. Christianity, in this sense, has contributed much to weaken the sense of duty of the citizen, and to deliver the world into the absolute power of existing circumstances."*

So much for the first opinion. Let us now turn to the second.

"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. Words of deep import, which have decided the future of Christianity! Words of perfected spirituality, and of marvellous justness, which have established the separation between the spi-

ritual and the temporal, and laid the basis of true liberalism and civilization."*

How could the *words of deep import, which laid the basis of true liberalism and civilization, have also weakened the sense of duty of the citizen, and delivered the world into the absolute power of existing circumstances?*

It is as I have already said. No assertion coming from the pen of this author is more worthy of belief than its converse. He expresses opinions at random—testifies to that which he has not seen, and makes statements not only unsupported by facts, but directly opposed to them. False witnesses invariably contradict themselves.

X.

This preliminary notice of some of the glaring errors contained in M. Renan's volume will suffice for the present. We may, perhaps, as we go on, find others yet more unaccountable.

But have we not already seen enough to induce us to condemn this work? I

put the question to our adversaries, and ask what they would think of us, did we thus write and argue on questions of religious philosophy and history?

In fact, there can be no second opinion on the merits of "*The Life of Jesus*."

Scientifically speaking, it has *none*.

This is the verdict specially pronounced on it in Germany. Not only have the congress of learned German Catholics assembled at Munich signalized this book as being beyond the pale of science; not only have all the German philosophers belonging to what is called orthodox Protestantism pronounced the same verdict: but it is a fact that even the rationalistic schools themselves have condemned it in like manner.

The rationalistic school of Gottingen, to which M. Renan appeared more or less to belong, speaks of it in the same way, and in the words of M. Ewald, pronounces a well-meant and most important judgment, which I will give at full length farther on.

The rationalistic school of Tubingen, which upholds the doctrines of Strauss and Bauer, and to which also M. Renan

appeared in some degree to belong, speaks thus of "*The Life of Jesus*," in "*La Gazette d'Augsbourg*." The German text is now before me, and I translate from it the conclusion of a long review by M. Keim, which has attracted much attention.

"It is a romance.....new *Mysteries of Paris*, written rapidly, on sacred ground, for the amusement of a profane public. On all serious questions the book is scientifically worthless.

"Instead of trifling with the great history of Jesus, which the world has venerated for eighteen hundred years—instead of seeking to gratify a morbid craving for excitement, and thus wounding the feelings of believers, and offering a direct insult to true science—instead of retiring for a few months, to a Maronite hut, as he states in his Introduction, and there, surrounded with five or six volumes, writing the history of the apostolic times, let M. Renan set to work once more with conscientiousness and sincerity. Thus only may he obtain the pardon of those friends of authentic history, who can

but smile now at his singular success."*

I find in a French publication, unbounded in its devotion to M. Renan, a defence of his book which seems to me to favour him blindly. Nevertheless, the writer acknowledges that the use which M. Renan makes of the information derived from different sources has contributed not a little to diffuse over the entire work *an appearance of prejudice, as if the author, without mercy or respect for the texts, had assumed the privilege of altering them at his will, in order to represent a conventional Christ.*"

"I agree with those," adds the critic, "who would, in many instances, have desired a stricter interpretation."

In fine, what must we think of what follows? M. Renan, in his Introduction, appeals for confirmation of what he writes, to different authors, one of whom is M. Colani, a rationalist, and a Protestant. We will now read what this gentleman has lately written with regard to M. Renan's *Life of Jesus*.

* Gazette d'Augsbourg, 15th, 16th, and 17th September, 1863.

“It is evident that, by means of strange combinations, or rather of *decisions of the most arbitrary nature*, M. Renan has produced a sketch of the life of Jesus, which is neither that drawn by the synoptics, nor yet that of St. John, although based upon fragments torn from the latter, and completely metamorphosed. This sketch is, I repeat, *a pure invention*, as regards not only facts, but dates. Far more serious matter for condemnation is to be found, however, in the *unheard-of proceeding* of M. Renan, who, having broken the narratives and discourses of the Gospel into a thousand parts, undertakes to reunite the fragments in such a manner as may suit his own purpose. Any discussion on such a subject would be useless. It only remains to protest energetically against such diplomacy, and that, not in the name of a religious prejudice, but in the interests of science, of criticism, and of historical truth.”*

* *Revue de Théologie Protestante de Strasbourg*, 5 livraison, p. 400, 401. I am indebted for the above quotation to the excellent pamphlet of Monsieur l'Abbé Preppel, entitled, “Une Edition Populaire de la Vie de Jesus.”

CHAPTER II.

ON THE FALSE BRETHREN OF JESUS.

I.

A critic who believes in God, and who is not, as far as I know, a sophist, although I see with regret that he frequents the society of men of that school, reproaches those of our Church with having chosen a bad method of combating the opinions of M. Renan; and maintains that the true way to oppose him would be to ask him the following questions:

From what sources have you derived your information?

What use have you made of it?

This is, however, precisely what has been done by Catholic writers: and this, as you have just seen, is the plan to which I have myself resorted.

I now proceed to the last example of the ten that I undertook, in the first place, to enumerate. It concerns the Brethren of our Lord.

It will be necessary to discuss this point with great care, and at considerable length. The reader must not regret this trouble, for he will find the subject a suggestive one. Setting aside the important historical and religious question which it involves, it will afford him an example and an exercise in criticism. It will lead him to analyse a mental process which he requires to understand; and will show him how criticism, based upon a denial of the supernatural, will stand against criticism founded on observation.

The question is this: had our Lord Jesus Christ brothers and sisters?

M. Renan quotes, on this point, the texts already generally known, all those, in fact, that bear upon the subject, except one, which he sees some reason for omitting; and he admits, perforce, what is universally admitted with regard to the well-known text: "*Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brothers, James and Joseph, and Simon and Jude? And his sisters, are they not all with us?*" Matt. xiii. 55, 56.

He admits, I say, that these four names

are those of the cousins-german of our Lord. Why must this be granted? Because, in several texts given elsewhere by M. Renan himself, we find Mary, the sister of the Holy Virgin, and the wife of Cleophas, named as the mother of James, of Joseph, and of Jude. The following texts are those to which I allude :

"His mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas." John xix. 25.

"Mary the mother of James and Joseph." Matt xxvii. 56.

And to these may be added the following, taken from the Epistle of St. Jude :

"Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." Jude i. 1.

The New Testament thus names explicitly, James, Joseph, and Jude ; Simon, the fourth, necessarily follows, as the sons of Mary, the sister of the Blessed Virgin, and the wife of Cleophas. They are therefore the cousins-german of Jesus. On the other hand, it is admitted that the cousins-german of our Lord are constantly called His brethren, according to the Hebrew custom.

The word *brother*, in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin, signifies, in the first place,

a *brother*, properly so-called; then, a *cousin-german*, and lastly, a *relative*. This may be ascertained by a reference to the elementary dictionaries of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues. It is a fact that no one seeks to deny.

Thus, it would appear, is the question of the brothers of our Lord set at rest, since it is proved, clearly demonstrated by the text, and admitted on both sides, that the four persons called, according to the Hebrew custom, *brothers of the Lord*, were in fact His cousins-german—the sons of Cleophas, and of Mary, the sister of the Blessed Virgin.

Notwithstanding this, however, M. Renan maintains that, besides these four cousins-german, our Lord Jesus Christ had brothers and sisters, born either of Joseph and Mary, or of Joseph and another wife.

On what authority, on what text, does the author ground this assertion?

He produces neither text, nor proof, nor yet reason, in support of his statement. It is simply the arbitrary decision of his own free will.

Where, in effect, can we find, either in

the New Testament or in ecclesiastical history, any trace whatever of these supposed brethren of our Lord? There is not the slightest.

He says, "The true brothers of Jesus, as well as their mother, remained in obscurity until after His death."

But if, even then, they became of importance, how is it that we find no mention of their acts, or even their names, in the Acts of the Apostles?

M. Renan even goes so far as to say—I cannot understand wherefore—that "the expression, *Brothers of the Lord*, evidently designated, in the Primitive church, a kind of order similar to that of the Apostles;" but, if so, how does it happen that neither in the Acts of the Apostles nor elsewhere, do we find any trace of the distinction between the true brothers and others, any mention of the acts or names of these natural brothers, who, according to the author, acquired a degree of importance after the death of Christ; and who evidently constituted, in the primitive Church, an order similar to that of the Apostles? Candidly speaking, is this possible?

But one thing, in any case, is manifestly impossible. The universal tradition of the Christian Church unites with all ancient authorities in affirming that Mary, always a virgin, had but one only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This would, I say, have been manifestly impossible if Jesus had had brothers, the sons of Mary, who, after His death, assumed a degree of importance, and formed in the Church a kind of order similar to that of the Apostles. It is absolutely certain that, had this been the case, the universal Christian tradition could not have affirmed that Jesus was the only Son of Mary.

For tradition, which M. Renan finds it convenient to ignore, is in fact the strongest of all evidence. It is in itself a proof more conclusive than either his arguments or ours; a proof with which the evidence even of written texts can admit of no comparison.

Ignorance of the law of facts can alone account for the senseless daring which leads M. Renan to stand forth alone against tradition, opposing to its convincing testimony his single assertion, unsup-

ported by texts and unconfirmed by authority.

Tradition exhibits, far better than written texts, the natural results of the aggregate of events recorded in history. Unless accidentally interrupted, it flows like a stream along the line marked out by facts. Hence the force of the expression: *Quod ubique, quod semper*. Tradition is not the evidence of this witness or of that, it is historical testimony in the widest sense. And if this be true in its general signification, what must we say of the Christian tradition, the fullest, the purest, the most solemn of all—the tradition which has been proved by argument and strengthened by opposition? To dispute its force and its tendency would be to struggle against the waves of the ocean.

Let us examine the grounds on which this author ventures to dispute tradition. He wishes, in defiance of its teaching, to prove that our Lord had brothers. He generally confines himself to unvarnished assertion; but on this point he attempts a species of reasoning.

I have not found, throughout the “*Life*

of *Jesus*," a single attempt at argument, or at scientific discussion, except in this one instance. The author announces, in his Preface, that he does not mean to engage deeply in argument; and, if this is the only point on which he undertakes to reason, he cannot be accused of having broken his resolution. The following is the line of argument which he pursues. Tradition affirms that our Lord had no brothers. M. Renan quotes, in opposition to tradition, the passage of St. John :

"Neither did His brethren believe in Him." John vii. 5.

Tradition replies : The brethren here referred to are either those of His cousins who were not apostles, or the greater number of His relatives who, as we learn elsewhere, did not at that time believe in Him.

As to brothers, properly so called, had such persons existed, and had they been of any importance, how could it have happened that no trace either of their names or their acts should have been handed down, either in the sacred writings or in the traditions of the time ?

M. Renan replies that "their names

were so totally unknown, that neither St. Matthew nor St. Mark had heard of them ;" and that they themselves "always remained in obscurity."

But we must ask how M. Renan can possibly assert, in the same page, that certain men "*remained always in obscurity ; their very names being totally unknown,*" and that, nevertheless, they acquired importance after the death of Christ, and even "*evidently constituted a kind of order, similar to that of the Apostles.*" How are we to understand this ?

The difficulty has not been solved by M. Renan.

Here, therefore, we conclude the first part of the argument.

II.

Can you find, asks tradition, a single passage of the Gospel in which mention is made of brothers of our Lord, properly so called ?

M. Renan will reply : I maintain that the texts nearly identical, taken from Mark and Matthew, refer to His brothers

according to nature—"Are not His brothers James and Joseph, and Simon and Jude?"

But how is it, resumes tradition, that we find it specified in the Gospel that these brothers are the sons of the sister of Mary, the wife of Cleophas? Are you not yourself obliged to admit that these are the names of His cousins-german? Yes!—These four names *are* the names of His cousins-german.

How then can there be question here of brothers properly so-called?

In this way—the Evangelist must have been in error—he must have meant to speak of the brothers of Christ properly so-called, although he named his cousins. Yes, adds the casuist, the Evangelist, although he meant to speak of the brothers of Christ, wrote the names of his cousins, because the names of the brothers were not known.

"Their names were so little known, that when the Evangelist put in the mouth of the men of Nazareth, the enumeration of the brothers according to natural relationship, the names of the sons of Cleo-

phas first presented themselves to him.”*

My readers will, I hope, appreciate this method of reasoning—but we will resume.

You maintain then, continues tradition, that St. Matthew, one of the twelve Apostles, has committed this singular error?

Yes—St. Matthew himself.

But St. Mark, who wrote from the dictation of St. Peter—St. Mark who, according to you, was the eye-witness of that which he relates—St. Mark who, again, according to you, may have been St. Peter himself—has left in his Gospel a similar text, in which he gives the same names. Mark vii. 3.

St. Mark, replies M. Renan, has also made a mistake. They are both in error.

“The Evangelist”—it should have been *the Evangelists*, since he speaks of two—“The Evangelist having heard the four sons of Cleophas mentioned as brothers of the Lord, must have given their names in mistake, instead of those of the true brothers, who remained in obscurity.”

But, rejoined tradition, I can see in

this only a purely arbitrary assertion on your part, since you bring forward neither text nor proof in support of your opinion. Try, as the texts are all against you, if you can adduce any reason whatever for such a statement.

This brings us to M. Renan's solitary effort in argument.

"The hypothesis that we propose—namely, that two Evangelists have fallen into error with regard to the four names—can alone remove the enormous difficulty of supposing that two sisters of the same name had each two or three sons also bearing the same names."

What does this imply? The following is the hypothesis of M. Renan. That the two Evangelists, Mark and Matthew, although they named the four cousins-german, *intended* to name brothers properly so-called. Then if, as he supposes, they did intend to name brothers properly so-called, it is plain, according to M. Renan, that no mistake being possible with regard to such a well-known fact, these brothers did actually exist.

This is the point requiring proof.

We have seen how far it has been proved by M. Renan's reasoning.

I beg my readers to examine carefully, what we may call the depth of this argument—an argument which M. Renan would certainly never have dared to bring forward in its clear and direct form. In that clear and direct form, I will now, however, place it before you.

The Gospel says : "*Are not his brothers James and Joseph, and Simon and Jude ?*"

Hence M. Renan infers that our Lord Jesus Christ had four brothers, the sons of Joseph, whom the Gospel calls James and Joseph, and Simon and Jude.

But, on the other hand, the Gospel says that James, Joseph and Jude—and consequently Simon also—are the cousins-german of Jesus Christ, the sons of Mary, sister of the Blessed Virgin, and wife of Cleophas.

It will be necessary here to attend closely to the argument. Therefore, says M. Renan, according to the Gospel, it must have happened that two sisters, each bearing the name of Mary, had each four sons, and each sister must have

given to her four sons the same four names.

Such is "*the enormous difficulty.*"

How is it to be solved?

By supposing that two of the Evangelists, Mark and Matthew, fell into error, and, intending to name the brothers, wrote the names of the cousins.

This is M. Renan's reasoning. Have I made it sufficiently plain to my readers?

Is it possible to follow the train of thought pursued by this author when he argues in such a manner?

The reader must forgive me if I inflict on him a somewhat lengthened explanation, as otherwise we cannot find our way out of this labyrinth.

Some such process as the following, must, I think, have been carried on in the author's mind, and must have resulted in this argument without beginning or end.

I maintain, as an indisputable fact, says M. Renan, and I undertake to prove that Jesus Christ had brothers, who were the sons of Joseph and of Mary; or at least, the sons of Joseph and of another wife.

I found this statement on the following text: "*Are not his brothers James and Joseph, and Simon and Jude?*"

These are the four brothers of Jesus Christ. I must certainly admit that the two Evangelists, Mark and Matthew, here name the four cousins-german of Jesus, the sons of Mary and of Cleophas. This fact is indisputable. Each of the two Evangelists names the cousins-german, but *both intended* to name the brothers. Both witnesses name the four cousins—be it so—but I say that they *intended* to name, not the cousins, but the brothers.

I acknowledge that this *intention* is denied by the fact, but I maintain this *intention*, as it is the starting point with regard to which I can allow no discussion.

The two witnesses on whose testimony I ground my argument both say the contrary of that which I assert. Be it so; but I repeat that they *intended* to say that which I wish them to have said.

This being granted, it being certain that they *intended* to speak of the brothers, they must clearly have fallen into error with regard to the names, otherwise

“an enormous difficulty” would arise: It would follow that the names of the four brothers must be identical with those of the four cousins.

I remove the enormous difficulty raised by the *intention* that I suppose the two witnesses to have had — an intention denied by the fact. I remove this difficulty by saying that they both fell into error, and that they took four names for four other names.

Hence I prove, on the one hand, that two of the Evangelists have fallen into error; and, on the other, that Jesus had four brothers, besides His four cousins-german.

Such is the train of reasoning which M. Renan pursues in order to prove that Jesus Christ had brothers, who were probably the sons of Mary. It all rests on this statement, which is the chief point, and forms the groundwork of the argument that *where the Evangelists spoke of the cousins of our Lord, they meant to name His brothers.*

I hope that my readers will have no difficulty in believing what I have stated. Should they, however, wish to see it con-

firmed, they have but to refer, either to the first edition of M. Renan's work, or to my volume, "*Les Sophistes*," in which I have quoted the two pages to which I allude, with the notes and references.

This work "*Les Sophistes*," may be described as a manual of criticism, which places unbroken facts before the reader. Of these he can judge for himself while studying them at his leisure, and thus he can ascertain, from his own observation, the mode of proceeding adopted by the sophists and atheists of the present day.

I submit to the verdict of public opinion such a method of religious criticism as that detailed above. I appeal to the partisans of M. Renan, and I call on M. Havet to say if he knows of any Christian writer who thus discusses the sacred text. He declares that it is impossible to reason with us, because we contrive to elude every demonstration. Let him now say to whom this observation really applies. He says elsewhere, speaking of us: "They get out of a difficulty, either by perverting the text, by supposing the extreme case of the text having been altered, or by any other convenient

artifice." I call on him now to say if these words apply to us, or to M. Renan.*

I appeal to the conscience of M. Havet, whom I know to be sincere, and I say, This then is the book which you extol as a work of history! This is the book which elicits your admiration, and excites your enthusiasm to a degree that astonishes your readers, the book which, with vehement eagerness, you present to the world, as "*The Life of Jesus, written, for the first time, by an author whose mind is capable of comprehending and feeling it.*" This, in fine, is the book on which you pronounce the amusing verdict, "*The legend of the life of Christ becomes, from this day, a portion of authentic history.*"

Permit me to say that, when I read these words, which, if they mean anything, and I cannot venture to say that they do, can only signify that, up to the present time, our Lord Jesus Christ has

* M. Renan himself says somewhere: "The end that faith has in view being, in her estimation, perfectly holy, she has no scruple in making use of bad arguments, where good ones do not exist." I ask M. Renan whether this can be said with most truth of him or of us.

not existed as a historical character, but simply as a legendary personage, and that, from this day, the work of M. Renan establishes His right to a place in the authentic records of history. When I read these words, which are remarkable even amongst the many wonders of the school of criticism ; when I found that history, through the labours of M. Renan, had discovered Christ, just as the new philosophy, or school of criticism, has, according to M. Vacherot, at length discovered reason, I paused to consider ; and having read the sentence over several times, I could but conclude, " This is the work of an unsound mind."

A few days later I met with a similar verdict from the pen of that most temperate writer, Monsieur de Pressensé, who qualifies your eulogium of M. Renan as "*self-sufficient pages, displaying the workings of a diseased imagination.*"

CHAPTER III.

ATHEISM AND DIVINATION.

Having thus enumerated some few of the more glaring errors of M. Renan's work, and having concluded from them, in the first place, that no assertion made by the author is of more value than its converse; we now enter on the methodical study of the book. We shall begin by examining the principle which it advocates, the plan which it pursues, and the result which it effects. We shall then say a few words on its value as a work of art, and on the tone and style of the author of this "*Life of Jesus*."

The principle openly advocated by the author is, in fact, that stated by M. Havet—that beyond this world and man, there is nothing—only an idea—no God—simply an idea. And this proposition, according to both M. Renan and M. Havet, must be laid down as indisputable. They do not write for those who refuse to

admit it, nor do they discuss the point with them.

The principle advocated by the book is therefore **UNDISPUTED ATHEISM**—and this principle has been just clearly evolved by M. Havet.

So that in the very commencement of the book intended to prove that Jesus Christ is not God, the author lays it down as an incontrovertible truth that there is *no* God.

For the better carrying out of this principle, he sets aside as worthless such facts and texts as appear to imply the existence of any thing beyond the reach of man, or outside the visible world of nature. The mere suspicion of such a tendency is sufficient to induce him to suppress them.

Thus he assumes, in the first instance, the right to suppress such texts and facts as may tell against the proposition that he means to lay down.

We will discuss this measure in its proper place, with all the attention which the gravity of the subject demands, and all the respect that we owe to the understanding of our readers.

Such, meanwhile, is the conclusion reached, with regard to the principle advocated in the book, by criticism founded on observation.

Now it is evident that the plan pursued by the author must depend, in a great measure, on the principle which he means to advocate.

This plan is explained to us by M. Renan himself in the opening pages of his Introduction.

“The plan I followed in this history has prevented the introduction into the text of long critical dissertations upon controverted points. It is not my practice to do over again what has been already done well.”*

Thus the author, having laid down, as the incontrovertible principle of his book, the very point that he undertakes to prove, announces that he means to avoid discussion on controverted points.

This, I acknowledge, I had anticipated—I know by experience the mode of proceeding adopted by writers of M. Renan’s class—but I scarcely expected to find the

plan detailed in the Preface. Still less did I expect the following acknowledgment:

"In such an effort to resuscitate the great minds of the past, *some share of divination and conjecture must be permitted*. The rule of art, in such a case, is a good guide."*

It is manifest that an author, starting with such a principle, and pursuing such a plan, has everything in his power.

But now, attend to what follows. In the same passage, speaking of *the rule of art*, which he accepts as a guide, he adds these remarkable words:

"The secret laws of life, of the progression of organic products, of the gradation of shades—ought to be continually consulted."

These then are the methodical and ruling forms which the author keeps continually before his eyes in the composition of this book—the secret laws of life—the *secret laws of the progression of organic products*—and *the secret laws of the gradation of shades!*

* Page lv.

It is needless to comment on the depth of absurdity contained in this passage!

Such are the pledges of good faith offered by M. Renan to the understanding of the public, and the conscience of the Christian world!

But this is not all—I am bound in justice to add that the author, in his Preface, gives the following solid pledge of accuracy and historical truth:

“A continuous system of notes enables the reader to verify from the authorities all the statements of the text.”

To verify from the authorities all the statements of the text! This is more than we are entitled to require. We must not take the words in their literal sense, particularly as we should thus deprive the author of that “*share of divination and conjecture*,” which he claims as a right. But I must admit that these words led me at first to imagine that, on most, if not all, of the essential points concerning which he ventures assertions opposed to tradition and Christian faith, he would endeavour to fulfil his promise, and would give us the opportunity, in this one instance, of meeting

him, face to face, in regular scientific discussion. But I soon found that this was not to be. The "*continuous system of notes*" having been examined and tested from first to last,—partly by me, partly by M. Lehir, of St. Sulpice, whose valuable observations are now in my possession, and partly by the energetic industry of the Rev. Father Perraud, of the Oratory—the result of our labours was such as to astonish these gentlemen and myself. All, without exception, who have attempted the verification of even a few pages will confirm what I say.

This *continuous system of notes* is a mockery.

In the first place, it does not give authority for all the propositions of the text. This M. Renan promised, although we, as I have already said, could not have required it.

In the second place, the proofs, such as they are—and they appear to me, in most cases, very insufficient—do not refer, except in rare instances, to the weightier points under discussion.

In the next place, these notes bear, in

very many cases, no relation whatever to the text.

And lastly, they frequently refer the reader to authorities which establish directly, and beyond the possibility of discussion, the exact converse of the propositions therein laid down.

For my own part, on first attempting the task of verification, I found in the course of a few minutes, the following instances of what I describe.

M. Renan asserts that Our Lord loved to speak, in His parables, of children. This proposition may be easily verified by a reference to the notes, as we find, in the margin, no less than nineteen passages from the Gospel, in which Jesus makes use of the word *child*.

Such a number of notes in support of the simple assertion that Jesus loved to speak of children, seemed to augur badly. It will be easy, I said, thus to accumulate in the margin, a quantity of notes destitute of meaning, and having no reference to the question at issue.

But I soon came to a proposition not quite so inoffensive. M. Renan says:

“Far from John abdicating in favor

of Jesus, Jesus, during all the time that he passed with him, recognised him as his superior, and only developed his own genius with timidity."*

Such an assertion as this is surely of sufficient importance to demand proof—yet, in this "*continuous system of notes*," which undertakes to "verify all the statements of the text," we find that this, with many others, has been passed over. The paragraph is not accompanied by a reference to any note.

Thus, we have nineteen notes to prove that Jesus loved to speak of children—but not one to support the assertion that Jesus, during all the time that He spent with John the Baptist, recognised him as His superior. Is not this really provoking? I understand perfectly that, in this instance, the author could not possibly support his assertion by a reference to the Gospel; since, as we all know, and as M. Renan himself is well aware, the Gospel says nothing of the kind. But if he were sincere in his desire to refer to original authorities, why did he not

quote here the texts which he knows as well as we do, in which the Gospel declares precisely the contrary?

These texts are to be found in the opening chapters of St. John, which the author cites on another subject, in the same page. There we find the well-known words used by St. John the Baptist in speaking of Our Lord: "*The latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose.*" John i. 27.

Now it happens that these same words are repeated in each of the four Gospels,* and especially in that of St. Matthew, which M. Renan recognises as the authentic record of the discourses of Our Lord.

On what then rests the assertion that "far from John abdicating in favour of Jesus, Jesus, during all the time that he passed with him, acknowledged him as his superior?" It rests absolutely on nothing.

The author quotes no text in contradiction of the Gospel—He does not refer us to the Talmud, neither does he cite the apocryphal writings, nor any other

* Matt. iii. 11. Mark i. 7. Luke iii. 16.

authority whatsoever ; and, in the absence of any text, he gives no reason for his statement. This species of gratuitous assertion, absolutely opposed to the texts which are before the eyes, or at least in the recollection of all his readers, and which the author himself recognises, and cites continually in his pages, is one of M. Renan's frequent resources, and that on which he appears to rely the most confidently in the course of his work.

A new expression is evidently needed to characterise such a mode of proceeding. I shall therefore call it *absolute assertionism*.

The following definition of the legislative power in Russia here recurs to my mind :

The will of the Prince is the essence of the law, and his decrees of to-day cannot be neutralized by his opposite decrees of yesterday.

It is plain that M. Renan arrogates to himself the same power. His word is absolute, and his actual assertion cannot be affected by his former declarations.

The reader must, by this time, be aware that M. Renan's work has, as he

declares, "nothing in common with history."

Nothing in common with history! Must we then call it a historical romance? No, says the Institute; it is a romance which is *not* historical. M. Renan has not even observed the rules of historical romance-writing. Walter Scott, speaking of his own plan, declares that he made it a rule, in the first place, to respect all recognised facts—that he made use of them as it suited his purpose; and that, in the intervals where authentic history supplies no data, he employed the art of the novelist to adorn his subject.

Is this the plan pursued in "*The Life of Jesus?*" By no means. The author acknowledges his work to be one of art. He claims a right to employ the aid of *divination and conjecture*. We grant it to him. Walter Scott claims the same privilege; but only where authentic history is silent. M. Renan, on the contrary, extends *conjecture and divination*, not only to the intervals of authentic history, but to history itself, in defiance of the evidence of facts and texts. The very passages which he had quoted as authentic

—the very chapters which he had cited as authoritative—he unblushingly contradicts when it suits his purpose; and that without even attempting to explain away the contradiction, or to qualify by one argument the audacity of his most extravagant assertions.

Nothing like this is to be found in the range of either ancient or modern literature. Except in the writings of men of the same class, I have never seen any thing approaching to it. The phenomenon of a practical school of sophistry can alone account for the appearance of such books.

“*The Life of Jesus*” is then manifestly a tissue of purely conjectural and absolutely arbitrary assertions. We may now understand why it is that M. Renan never makes any reply to the criticisms showered upon him—for what reply can he offer to the exposition of the palpable errors, with regard to facts and texts, which crowd his volume?

M. Renan is praised for the perfect calmness with which he endures the attacks of criticism, never seeking to justify himself by a reply. This patient endurance may be a virtue, but it is one

which, in his case, admits of no alternative.

To him who can find nothing to say, silence becomes a necessity.

To sum up what we have already said, The principle laid down in this book is *undisputed atheism*.

The plan avowedly pursued by the author includes—Little scientific discussion—A right to the use of *conjecture and divination*—A system of notes referring to authorities.

M. Renan has carried out the first and second parts of this plan, but not the third. Even with regard to the second, he leaves something to be desired: for he speaks of *conjecture and divination* according to the *rule of art*. The rule of art—the idea of beauty—would certainly have been, in such a case, a good guide: but this rule of art, or sense of beauty, has not been implicitly followed, as we shall see.

Properly speaking, then, we find no method in this book. The author says what he chooses, and in this consists his only plan. His actual will, unrestrained by any former opinion, is with him the

rule of judgment. This it is that I have called *absolute assertionalism*.

The author says exactly what he chooses. This is his only rule, and by this we must abide. But we may at least ask : What is it that he does choose to say? What constitutes the ground-work of his plan? Whither does he tend? What is the bent of his thoughts? What his course and method of reasoning? What, in fact, is his guiding principle? It seems to me that I can reply. His mind is in the state so well described, and so senselessly extolled, by a member of his school.

"One principle appears to have taken forcible possession" of this mind, "which is that no assertion is more true than its converse. Truth and error no longer exist for us. We must invent new terms as substitutes for the familiar words. We see around us only degrees and shades. We admit even the identity of contradictory facts. We admit all, because we comprehend all. We undertake to explain all things, and we conclude by approving that which the mind is capable of elucidating." *

* See "Les Sophistes et la Critique," l. 1. c. 11.

None can fail to recognize this intellectual portrait. Yes, this state of mental debility, weariness, and enervation does, in fact, exist amongst those of our time. The book before us has been dictated by this very spirit, which yields to every impulse, and wavers with every breath. This is, in reality, the ground-work and method of reasoning adopted by the author of "*The Life of Jesus*."

But this work not only evinces shallowness of mind, and want of logical power. It also indicates intellectual pride, and reveals a presumptuous desire to establish a system. It shows an acknowledged determination to set at nought logic, metaphysics, and all the powers of the human mind, in the sense that we have noted above; and to prove that, so far at least, as regards the present time, we must consider God, the soul, truth, falsehood, good and evil, but as so many myths.

This is the end which M. Renan has in view, throughout his "*Life of Jesus*."

In this volume he wishes, or at least appears to wish, to establish the identity of Christianity and Materialism—of athe-

ism and religion—of scorn and adoration—and even, to a certain extent, of the divinity and the non-divinity of Christ.

What can be—what has been—the consequence of such an undertaking? What the result effected—what the conclusion reached by the book? This we shall now see.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DISUNION OF CHARACTERS.

I must here request that the reader will recal to his mind those examples of opposite conclusions, totally incompatible one with the other, to which we have already alluded.*

Let him call to mind the words of a certain writer, who, speaking of German sophistry, pronounces it "*sterile and con-*

* This refers to the first book of "*Les Sophistes et la Critique*," of which the present volume forms a popular edition. In this edition I have omitted the second and third books, which I considered hard to be understood. These books treat of the general error, of which M. Renan's work is a particular instance.

tradictory, both in its terms and in its essence," and immediately adds that "*it contains a living and eternal idea, which, although cloaked beneath a mass of words, is sufficient in itself, for the glory of a philosopher, of a nation, and of a century.*"

Are these two conclusions compatible one with the other?

Let them call to mind another writer, who, alluding to the Alexandrian philosophy, asserts that this doctrine, "*is not a mere juxtaposition—a forced combination of contrary principles ; but a true alliance—a harmonious fusion of doctrines ;*" and who, in the same page, declares that this very doctrine "*is not an impartial conciliation of all the elements of thought, but a forced and artful overthrowing of all doctrine.*"

It is evident that, although the above opinions are set forth by their respective authors in the same pages, and as if constituting, in each case, a single judgment, still the conclusions indicated are, in fact, contradictory, adverse to one another, and absolutely inconsistent. The reader is left, in each instance, to choose between

two statements. Thus to lay down a negative and an affirmative; heaping them, as it were, one on the other, and maintaining their identity in defiance of reason, is absolutely to ignore the meaning of words and the power of thought.

Now, M. Renan's work, considered as a whole, may be said to tend towards a similar result.

Notwithstanding numerous precautions, he reaches a twofold conclusion, or, rather, two opposite conclusions of the same nature as those which we have just quoted; the one on Hegel, the other on the doctrines of the Alexandrian school.

The writers of this sect endeavour, in every way, and on every question, to establish the identity of contrary things. They fancy that they can thus originate ideas of a new and superior order. They hope to accomplish, in the intellectual world, what culture has effected in the natural, by producing flowers and fruits of rarer beauty and greater perfection than those already known. On this principle, they perpetually seek to ascertain the result of the combination of an affirmative with a negative. But they forget that no

florist ever yet attempted to effect the combination of a flower with its negative ; nor even, as would be more practicable, that of a flower with a bird. Certain conditions are indispensable to union. All combinations do not produce hybrids, uniting the different characteristics of both subjects ; and there are cases in which the effort to force a union between varieties too far asunder, eventuates in the singular result known in science as the *disunion of characters*.

What is meant by the disunion of characters ? Here is an example. An attempt is made to combine two flowers, one bearing a smooth fruit, the other a thorny one. The result of this forced union is a double fruit, showing the disunion of characters ; for, of its two sides, or equal parts, one is perfectly smooth, the other bristling with thorns. The characters are in juxtaposition, but disjointed, and incapable of blending.

What do the sophists of to-day obtain in their search after two-fold conclusions ? They obtain the disunion of characters. They arrive at two conclusions instead of one.

The two characters of our Lord, as represented in M. Renan's work, are disjoined; they will ever remain disjoined, and they cannot, by any possibility, blend into one. The author shows us, not one portrait, but two distinct pictures, formed separately, and afterwards joined. We find, on one side, a half-countenance of our Lord, surmounted by half a halo of glory, and a divided crown of thorns. On the other side, we find the portrait, or half-countenance of a totally different person; and this second and perfectly distinct personage is no other than the author himself, as we infer from the remarks of M. Havet on "certain passages of the book, in which the individuality of the author shows itself more plainly. For example," continues M. Havet, "when M. Renan represents Jesus as founding that great doctrine of transcendent scorn—the true doctrine of the liberty of souls, which can alone bring peace—who does not recognize the pretensions of that haughty individuality"—(the individuality of M. Renan)—"entrenching itself in legitimate pride against the degrading restraints of life?"

This is the portrait of M. Renan, placed in juxtaposition with the half portrait of our Lord, but very manifestly disjoined from it.

M. Havet might also have quoted the passages which treat of the sincerity of the LORD JESUS; he might have explained the author's theory with regard to the different gradations of truth, and the possibility of conciliating imposture and honesty; but would he have recognized here also the "*haughty individuality*" of M. Renan?

It is then manifest that we find here two portraits, which the author has vainly attempted to amalgamate; and this attempt has inevitably led to the *disunion of characters*—that is, to the formation of two half-figures, one divine, the other with no pretensions to divinity.

It is not, therefore, possible to consider this work as delineating a single portrait, for it represents two, totally dissimilar; incongruous, and disjoined. We have to choose between the two, for the mind cannot take in both. If several shoots be grafted on one stem, one of them, in a

short time, takes root, while the others fade away.

This is exemplified by M. Havet, when he reproaches M. Renan for having "*overloaded with poetical illusion*," the half-portrait of Jesus, and entreats him to abandon more boldly "*the illusion of his divinity*."

Like nature, he dislikes more grafts than one; and so far, at least, he has right at his side.

CHAPTER V.

THE VASE AND THE PITCHER.

It is time now to inquire if this book, false and bad as it is, can lay claim to any artistic merit.

We must ask, in the first place, if it is possible that a book which sets aside, in its aim and method, the principles of logic, and which exhibits, as its result, a two-fold conclusion, or two half figures disjoined, can be truly a work of art, and present the characteristics of beauty.

This is evidently impossible. With Monsieur de Pressensé, we "entirely disallow such a claim on the part of '*The Life of Jesus*;' and consider that the author has failed as artist, no less than as historian."

The old maxim, "*truth alone is beautiful*," admits of no contradiction. Neither does the aphorism: the unlogical writer, however finished his style, will never produce a persuasive book.

This cannot be denied. It is a fact also, that beauty cannot exist without uniformity. In music, the finest melody would lose its charm if played on two different keys at the same time. In sculpture, there could be no beauty in the union of two figures characteristically unsuited to each other. I absolutely deny the beauty of this book, and I even go farther, and maintain that I can point out in it most of the characteristics of deformity. I refer my readers to Horace's "*Poetical Art*," where they will find incontrovertible rules for the exercise of judgment. The opening lines, in particular, will be found to describe the characteristics of deformity

in poetry and art. They are embodied in the following passage.

"Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas,
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne."*

And in the continuation, especially these lines :

"Amphora coepit
Institui, currente rota cur urceus exit?"†

I maintain the general deformity of this book, and I deny that it possesses beauty, except in some few passages.

It gives me the idea of a wonderfully sweet melody, scattered here and there in broken fragments, through a piece of music not only destitute of harmony, but set in a different key.

But, as I have undertaken a work of criticism, I will, as is only right, separate

* Should a painter endeavour to join to a human head the neck of a horse, and over limbs gathered from different animals to spread plumage of various colours? Should he mould a beautiful female form, shamefully terminating in a hideous fish?

† You begin to mould a stately vase. Why, as the wheel revolves, does it turn out a little pitcher?

the wheat from the tares, although the good grain bears here but a very small proportion to the weeds by which it is choked. To return to my former comparison, I will seek the fragments of the sweet melody, and will strive to reunite them in a harmonious whole, so that the author himself will perhaps regret having scattered and lost a thing of so much beauty.

This I mean to do hereafter, but, for the present, setting aside the fragments to which I have alluded, and speaking of the book as a whole, I doubt if it be possible to find a work of art which has more deplorably failed.

Let us look into the description of Galilee, which is said to be the finest passage of the book, and which, to superficial readers, appears very beautiful. We will, however, read it carefully.

Here is the opening passage.

“Galilee was thus an immense furnace, wherein the most diverse elements were seething. An extraordinary contempt of life, or, more properly speaking, a kind of longing for death, was the consequence of these agitations.....and of these great

fanatical movements.... Revolution caused here a general fermentation..... and fostered the most colossal hopes."

Such are the first lines. How little do they prepare us for what follows !

"This lovely country.....overflowed at the time of Jesus,"—(the same time)—
"with happiness and prosperity!"

"This beautiful external nature.... this contented and easily satisfied life, imprinted a charming and idyllic character on all the dreams of Galilee.... The whole history of infant Christianity has thus become a delightful pastoral."

Is all this to be believed? Can it be even tolerated?

Is it not precisely what Horace describes in the opening of his "Poetical Art," and what he declares to be absurd and ridiculous?

"Spectatum admissi, risum teneatis, amici? *

Do we find, in either ancient or modern literature, so striking an example of the failure indicated by Horace?

* "If admitted to view it, friends, would you not laugh?"

“You begin to mould a stately vase—why, as the wheel revolves, does it turn out a little pitcher?”

In the opening lines of the description, in the first page, Galilee is described as the *Amphora*—as “*an immense furnace, wherein the most diverse elements were seething*”—and in the second page, in two turns of the wheel, the *Amphora* has become a pitcher—that *Urceus*, against which Horace warns us.

This example will surely be cited in future schools of rhetoric, as an illustration of the lines.

Let me ask my readers, in all good faith, if it be possible that a painter or poet, who thus describes things, can have any fixed idea regarding his subject. No, he has no model, either real or ideal; he has absolutely nothing before his mental vision. He is able to compose, to place sentences in opposition. He can combine a number of phrases, many of which, considered apart, are beautiful enough, perhaps even quite remarkable for finish of style; but which, taken as a whole, represent a simple impossibility, an anomaly greater than would be “the human head

on the neck of a horse," or, "the beautiful female form terminating in a hideous fish;" a transformation more startling than that of "*the stately vase into a little pitcher.*"

This description of Galilee may serve as a specimen of the book. The author has evidently neither idea nor reality from which to work. He has no object before him; nothing in view but his art, his skill, and his purpose; and these are not sufficient, or rather, properly speaking, they are nothing. He says that he writes from personal observation, but this I deny. I say that he has not seen what he describes, for he contradicts himself every instant. Even in this description the false painter, assuming to have seen what he portrays, clashes fearfully with actual realities. In the following passage he attempts to introduce a deep thought into his representation:

"Every nation called to high destinies ought to be a little world in itself, including opposite poles." Thence, according to Hegel, springs the contrast, the antithesis and synthesis of Judea and Galilee. We shall find that facts bear out the

theoretical formula. Then, in order to show "what Galilee has dared," and the striking contrast between it and Judea, the author cites "the good Zacheus" called to the feast. Now Zacheus belonged to Jericho, a city of Judea, and not by any means to Galilee. At Jericho was enacted the sublime episode of the good Zacheus. False witnesses invariably contradict themselves.

Again, what is meant by this? By the people of Galilee who "*drink much wine*"—who are "*no way gifted in art*"—who are "*indifferent to beauties of form*"—and whose life, nevertheless, "*spiritualised itself in ethereal dreams—in a kind of poetic mysticism,*" and who "*created the most sublime ideal for the popular imagination.*"

Is not this another instance of the disunion of characters? Is there any consistency here? Or rather, do we not find in these passages an illustration of the "*plumage of various colours,*" spoken of by Horace?

It is clear, as I have already said, that this author has undertaken to write without setting before him either an ideal or a

material model. His book has neither body nor soul, and is, in fact, nothing more than a mask. I pity those who imagine they can discern any beauty in it.

Another unworthy error is the allusion, in the representation of the Passion, to the "*young maidens of Galilee*." Could a true painter, an eye-witness, have been guilty of such a fault?

But we now come to an instance which surpasses all the rest in absurdity—which is absurd in a threefold sense, as thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. I ask any man of sense and judgment, whoever he may be, and in whatever branch of art his genius may have developed itself, if the words, "*subtle and mirthful philosopher*" should, in any case, be applied to our Lord Jesus Christ. If he answer in the affirmative, I must admit that nothing remains to be said.

The ideal of our Lord is a living type, which cannot and ought not to be altered; a type which will remain unchanged while the world endures. To apply to this ideal the trivial and unmeaning phrase, "*a subtle and mirthful philosopher*," is to

commit an error so gross, that no right-minded critic can forgive it. He who has so erred is lost.

But this is not all. We find, on the other hand, that the author applies to this same ideal—eternal and unchangeable as it necessarily is—another expression no less intolerable than that just quoted. He speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ as “*an austere giant*.” This is another grievous error; and I appeal to any artist to confirm what I say. The words “*austere giant*” may apply, if you will, to the Tempter in Ary Scheffer’s painting—but never to the Christ, the pure, mild, and humble Saviour; calm in His light, in His love, and in His strength, who, compared with the *austere giant*, is as Apollo to the Titans.

Here then are two utterly destructive features, sufficient in themselves to disfigure the entire picture. But this terrific and inflexible artist has his own system, which he undertakes to enforce. We must not imagine that, through oversight or forgetfulness, he has dared to misrepresent, with such strange inconsistency, the characteristics of our Lord; for, with

consummate audacity, he has united the two expressions, "*subtle and mirthful philosopher*," and "*austere giant*," in one and the same sentence.

Thus it runs :

"We behold no longer the subtle and mirthful philosopher of early days ; but the austere giant, drawn by a sort of sublime presentiment farther and farther yet beyond the pale of humanity."

Is it possible that a man who, by your own showing, was the greatest of all men, should be, at thirty years of age, "*a subtle and mirthful philosopher*," only to be transformed, the following year, into "*an austere giant*?" What ! you who reject the half of one of the Gospels solely because, if Jesus Christ spoke as St. Matthew records, He could not have spoken in the manner represented by St. John. You who, on account of a trifling difference of style in these two Gospels, maintain that they cannot refer to the same individual. You are yourself the one to represent that individual in two dissimilar and radically incompatible characters, as "*a subtle and mirthful philosopher*," and, at the same time, as "*an austere giant*!"

I can understand how it is that, in that wonderful piece of sculpture—the Christ, at Avignon—the artist has endeavoured to express, in the magnificent head of our Lord, the two sentiments which we may suppose to have possessed the mind of the crucified Saviour—the agony of the cross, and the triumph of His approaching resurrection.

I admit that, by an exercise of artistic skill, the countenance of the Christ appears on one side mournful, on the other triumphant; and I grant that the two expressions appear to blend into one when the full face is seen. But I speak here of two expressions, both real, and each perfectly compatible with the other; whilst you, senseless painter that you are, endeavour, by a similar exercise of skill, to bestow on the same individual two distinct attributes, both false, and at the same time utterly incongruous!

CHAPTER VI.

THE GOSPEL OF THE FOX.

Having, in this methodical study of the "*Life of Jesus*," endeavoured to set before my readers the principle advocated by the author, the plan which he pursues, the twofold conclusion which he reaches, and the value of the book as a work of art, I now come to the discussion of its tone and style.

The tone of a book may be said to include everything; to express, in fact, the soul and spirit of the work.

Now what must we say of the tone of the book before us?

We must say, in the first place, that it has two.

It is written in two distinct tones; and its effect may be compared to that of a piece of music composed in two different keys, in the vain expectation of their blending into one.

But how could two keys ever blend

into one? Such a thing is manifestly impossible. The music must be either in one or the other—there is no getting out of the difficulty. What would be the consequence of a musician attempting to sing in two keys at the same time? He could only alternate, performing first a few bars in one key, and then a few bars in the other. Thus it is with M. Renan. He alternates and passes from one tone to another, without the slightest attempt at scientific transition. The effect, as may be imagined, is intolerable.

These two tones may be illustrated by a reference to the Gospel narrative, when we read that the people said to Jesus, "Hail! King of the Jews;" and that they "gave Him blows." "*Et dicebant; Ave, rex Judæorum et dabant ei alapas.*" These are the two tones of the book—salutations and blows. In truth, however, the hardened soldiers who insulted our Lord used but one tone, for they said: "Hail!" in accents of the grossest irony, and the blows corresponded with the salutations; while here, it cannot be denied that M. Renan occasionally salutes the Lord Jesus in accents of deep ar

heartfelt veneration. We are forced to admit this; and therefore it is that when, a moment after, he offers Him insults and blows, we cannot avoid saying that we have never witnessed inconsistency more hateful or more repulsive.

It is therefore impossible to discuss the tone of the book, for we find it written, not in one tone, but in two.

We must then discuss them separately. And first, with regard to the tone of feeling and veneration—*Ave rex Judæorum*—I speak of it myself with respect—I hold myself indebted for it to M. Renan, and I mean to set that phase of the book before my readers, when, in the course of my unbiassed criticism, I come to the question: Is there anything true, beautiful, or good in this "*Life of Jesus*?"

As regards the other, however: "*et dabant ei alapas*"—and they gave him blows—this is the place to discuss, and condemn it. But how shall I find words to describe this tone?

I say all when I utter the following truth: it is a tone of calm superiority assumed by M. Renan in speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have said it, and I repeat it—A tone of calm, moral and intellectual superiority, assumed by M. Renan in speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ!

A tone which implies that the mind of M. Renan is more enlarged, more enlightened, and more upright than the mind of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I have written, thirty times over, in the margin of my copy of "*The Life of Jesus*," the strongest word which our language supplies in condemnation of this tone; but I will not repeat it here, as I consider it far too mild for the occasion.

The simple statement of the fact is alone adequate to the fact itself: this author assumes a tone of calm superiority in speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ!

It is evident that there is no word in any language sufficiently strong to condemn such a form of expression as the following, perpetually employed by the author in speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ:

"*Jesus has no idea of.....*" (Page 127.)

"*Jesus knew nothing of.....*" (Page 40.)

"Jesus has not the least notion of....."
(Page 128.)

"Jesus had not the slightest idea of....." (Page 257.)

"Jesus had not the idea of....." (Page 260.)

"Jesus had never a very definite idea of....." (Page 305.)

"The transcendent idealism of Jesus never permitted him to have a very clear idea of....." (Page 244.)

I say nothing here of these assertions in themselves, nor of their absolute absurdity. This is not the time or place for such a discussion. I speak only of their *tone*—and I say that no word exists, in any language, sufficiently strong to condemn such a tone.

Consider who he is who thus expresses himself: a member of that sect whose mental state we have described above—an incidental writer, who has just now provoked the indignant ridicule of every serious thinker throughout Europe—a wretched sophist, in whose estimation no assertion is more true than its converse—a weakminded man, who, both theoretically and practically, has lost the power of dis-

tinguishing between what *is* and what *is not*—of understanding the *for* and *against* in a debate—the *affirmative* and the *negative* in an argument—he it is who comes forward with composed self-reliance, and his habitual half-scoffing manner, to pronounce judgment, in virtue of his exquisite natural tact and sound understanding, on the power and the limits of the mind of JESUS CHRIST, the Eternal Ruler of Mankind!

He tells us of things of which Jesus Christ *had no idea*; and of others, of which He could never have had *any definite conception*. He knows the subjects on which *the opinions* of our Lord *were very vague*—those on which His mind was to a great degree in darkness—and even the causes which *interfered with the development* of that mind. He goes so far as to define the limited intellectual state "*which was always that of Christ.*"

And meanwhile, the partisans of the author assert that he is gifted with "a mind of unlimited compass, and of extraordinary elevation."*

* M. Havet, *loco citato*.

All this, I repeat, cannot be conveyed by abstract words. I can only express the fact by stating the details.

This is one of the tones of the book, and only *one*; for it is written, I repeat, in two tones, one of which, at least, cannot be described by any word in our language.

Let us now speak of the style of the work.

It is that which must have naturally resulted from the effort made by the author to blend its separate tones, and amalgamate its different conclusions.

The characteristics of this style are necessarily constant hesitation, and perpetual ambiguous duality.

Here, I acknowledge, I should wish to say a word plainly descriptive of such a style.

The author, throughout the book, pursues a devious course. He wanders perpetually from one side of his subject to the other; and, in no single instance does he pursue a direct line of argument. If he make a feint of turning to the right, you may be nearly sure of finding him immediately at the left; and no sooner

have you caught him there, than another quick movement has brought him to the right once more.

After writing the above lines, I was not surprised to find the same opinion expressed by M. Keim, a German critic, in the following nearly similar words :

“He finds his way only by wonderfully devious courses.”

Let me ask now if this is not a most accurate description of M. Renan's style. And let me also ask if we cannot find in nature a creature which adopts the same mode of progression.

Our Lord, in speaking of Herod, used the words, “Go, say to that Fox.” May I not then make use of the same expression ? Yes ; the author's progress resembles nothing more closely than the doubling and winding of a fox. The resemblance cannot fail to strike any observant reader. The fox, after all, is one of God's creatures, and the epithet should not be considered offensive.

Without the least intention of applying the words in ridicule, I will ask, in the simple style of St. Francis of Assisium : Oh, brother fox, why do you walk thus ?

Being anxious, lately, to study the head of the fox, I visited the *Jardin des Plantes*, and there I had an opportunity of comparing the countenance of that animal with the face of the lion. I know not if my imagination led me astray ; but, while the latter appeared to me to express a kind of terrific goodness, that of the fox conveyed to my mind the idea of *transcendent scorn*. This may be verified by any one closely observing the countenance of the fox.

However this may be, there were, and there are four Gospels—the Gospel of the Ox, that of the Lion, that of the Man, and that of the Eagle. Surely there cannot be a fifth, entitled *The Gospel of the Fox!*

What would be the result were we to analyse here, in all their contemptible details, the author's theories with regard to the different standards of truth, the shades of sincerity, the varieties of honesty? What ought we to say of his application of the fundamental principles of sophistry to the delicate task of conciliating the two extremes, "*Honesty and imposture?*"

"Honesty and imposture," he says, "are words which, in our rigid consciences, are opposed as two irreconcilable terms."* He endeavours, however, to conciliate the two by asserting openly that "THERE ARE MANY STANDARDS OF SINCERITY," and that "*the heroes.....whd lead the people.....accomplish by their falsehoods what we, who are so powerless, cannot effect by our scruples.*"

I have been asserting, for the last ten years, that the sophists organised philosophically a system of falsehood. This I maintained; and now they themselves openly acknowledge the fact.

Yes; the sophists organise a system of falsehood by maintaining that every complete idea is twofold; that, like a little world, it should have two poles, and contain within itself its contrary principle; that, generally speaking, an idea only attains its fulness, and becomes entire and synthetic by coming into collision with the simple primitive idea. This collision is called in German *umschlag*, and it may be effected either from the thesis to the

antithesis, or from the antithesis to the thesis. When a sophist is pursued by a critic, (I mean, of course, a judicious and observant critic,) whatever be the point of attack, he finds a ready resource in the doubling and winding movement, flying unceasingly from one side to the other, as long as the pursuit continues. We find an example of this in "*The Study of Sophistry*," which is especially remarkable as the production of a writer of undoubted personal sincerity.

I am constantly asked : Do you consider sophists worth the trouble you take to prove them in the wrong ?

To this I reply, first, that any man who goes astray is worth the trouble of seeking. If I felt the scorn which, in truth, I do not feel, I would add : It is in some sort a pathological—I had nearly written a teratological case—on which I call in the aid of science.

But the fitting answer is this :

Are these writers, in their acknowledged characters as sophists and rhetoricians, so far beneath Gorgias ? And am I so far beyond Aristotle and Plato ?

These two great men did not disdain to

display their strength against Gorgias and his fellows; and yet no one can assert that they lost their time in thus "*hunting down sophistry*,"* for they succeeded in exterminating the species for more than two thousand years. For my part, I seek no greater reward.

It is time that we also should proceed to such a radical extermination. True philosophy will never re-appear in France, or rather in Europe, until, as in Greece of old, we succeed in banishing sophistry, and thus effecting the first act of creation, the separation of light from darkness.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FRAGMENTS OF THE BROKEN DIAMOND.

It is time now to gather the fragments of the broken diamond, and to remove them from the bad and worthless mass

* The words *hunting* and *species* are borrowed from Plato. He calls the Sophists "a *species* of which the *hunting* is very difficult."

See the close of the Dialogue entitled "*The Sophist*."

through which they have been scattered ; to seek, amidst the harsh sounds of discordant music, for the sweet strains of the heavenly melody, and unite them in a harmonious whole.

Our task is now to indicate the beauties of M. Renan's work.

First on the list, we place its title, that name of JESUS, which is the secret of its success. Next, many of the true features of Our Lord, disguised, but not effaced by the author.

M. Renan has had the good sense to anticipate, by a few years, the movement which is gradually, by means of an accumulation of proofs, leading back the most obstinate critics to a belief in the authenticity of the Gospels. He fearlessly acknowledges this, and retracts his previous denials.

"On the whole, I admit as authentic the four Canonical Gospels. All, in my opinion, date from the first century."
(Page xxxvii.)

And with regard to the Apocryphal Writings, he says :

"These compositions ought not, in any manner, to be put upon the same footing

as the Canonical Gospels. They are insipid and puerile amplifications, having the Canonical Gospels for their basis, and adding thereto nothing of any value." (Page xliii.)

Here then, after so many wanderings, we find criticism returning, as far as regards the great mass of facts, to the starting-point—the evidence of tradition established by the judgment of the primitive Church.

M. Renan also admits that the whole of the New Testament was completed, in its present form, before the end of the first century.

Such, not only in fact, but even according to this author, are the authentic sources from which we derive our knowledge of the acts and words of Christ.

He says elsewhere, in speaking of the words of Jesus :

"A kind of splendour, at once mild and terrible—a divine strength, if we may so speak, emphasises these words, detaches them from the context, and renders them easily distinguishable. The real words of Jesus reveal themselves spontaneously—they vibrate to the touch—they translat

without effort—and assume, as if of themselves, their proper place in the narrative, from which they stand forth in the strongest possible relief.” (Page xxxviii.)

Thus is expressed an incontrovertible truth. All this, and more, I have myself experienced, during long years, with regard to the words of Christ, handed down to us in the Gospels. They are ever-living, and ever-applicable—eternal, and yet always new—newer, and at the same time, older than any condition of the soul—any age of the world—the words, in short, of eternal life.

Alluding to the mission of our Lord, the author says :

“ Jesus became the object, and fixed the starting-point of the future faith of mankind. The great event of the history of the world is the revolution by which the noblest portions of humanity have passed from the ancient religions, comprised under the vague name of Paganism, to a religion founded on the Divine Unity, the Trinity, and the Incarnation of the Son of God.” (Pages 1 and 2.)

At the time of the coming of Jesus, the world, according to history, was in

expectation of some great event. So says M. Renan. He then continues :

“Dreams of a universal palingenesis” spread through the Roman world, and “gave birth, on all sides, to unlimited hopes.” (Pages 17, 18.)

“In Judea, expectation was at its height.” And then it was that appeared “that incomparable Man, to whom the universal conscience has decreed the title of Son of God ; and with justice, since, through his means, religious faith received an impulse which has never been equalled before or since—which will probably never find a parallel in time to come.”

In the midst of that people who first “sought for a general theory of the progress of our species, and who, thanks to a kind of prophetic sense,” were “marvellously apt to see the great lines of the future,” was born a Man—the mightiest of all men—of whom this was the striking characteristic :

“He possessed a fixed personal resolution, which, exceeding in intensity every other created will, directs at this hour the destinies of mankind.” (Pages 47, 46.)

Thus does this Man act :

He lays down " the most beautiful code of perfect life that any moralist has ever traced." (Page 84.)

He suggests to mankind " an absolutely new idea—the idea of a worship founded on purity of heart, and on human brotherhood." (Page 90.)

" Thus he has laid the eternal foundation-stone of true religion ; and if religion is essential to humanity, he has by this deserved the Divine rank which the world has accorded to him." (Page 90.)

" He discerned the good, and, at the price of his blood, he caused its triumph. Jesus, from this double point of view, is without equal : his glory remains entire, and it will ever be renewed." (Page 93.)

He is, " for eternity, the true Creator of the peace of the soul—the great consoler of life." (Page 176.)

Why is this ? Because of the following words :

" The hour cometh, and now is, when ye shall neither on this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father ; but when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth." (Page 234.)

"The day on which he uttered these words, he pronounced, for the first time, the sentence upon which reposes the edifice of eternal religion. He founded the pure worship of all ages and all lands—that which all noble minds will practise until the end of time. Not only was the religion which he taught that day the best religion of humanity; but it was the absolute religion: and if other planets are inhabited by beings gifted with reason and morality, their religion cannot differ from that which Jesus preached by the Well of Jacob." (Page 234.)

"This word of Jesus was as lightning flashing through the darkness of night. Eighteen centuries elapsed before the eyes of mankind—what do I say!—of an infinitely small portion of mankind, had become familiarized with it. But to the brief flash will succeed the full light of day, and, after having traversed all the cycles of error, the mind of man will yet return to that word, as the immortal expression of its faith and its hope." (Page 235.)

Let us declare, "for the honour of our great Master, this true kingdom of God-

this kingdom of the spirit—which, like the grain of mustard-seed, has become a tree overshadowing the world, amidst whose branches the birds have their nests : this true kingdom of God was understood, desired, and founded by Jesus—His was the eternal morality—that morality which has saved mankind. He proposed to himself to create a new state of humanity. He conceived the real city of God, the true palingenesis, the Sermon on the Mount, the apotheosis of the weak, the love of the people, regard for the poor, and the restoration of all that is humble, true and simple. This restoration was depicted by his words in characters which will endure to all eternity—each one of us owes to him that which is best in himself." (Pages 283, 282.)

"Jesus is more than the reformer of an old worship : he is the founder of the eternal religion of humanity." (Page 282.)

What was this trouble—this agony of the Garden of Olives ?

"Did he regret his too lofty nature, and, victim of his greatness, mourn that he had not remained a simple artisan of Nazareth ? It is certain at least that his

divine nature soon regained the supremacy. He might still have avoided death, but he would not do so. Love for his mission conquered. He accepted the chalice which he was to drink to the dregs. And there remained only the incomparable hero of the Passion—the founder of the rights of free conscience—the finished model which all suffering souls will contemplate for their strength and consolation.” (Page 379.)

Then on the Cross :

“He saw in his death the salvation of the world; he lost sight of the hideous spectacle spread at his feet, and, profoundly united to his Father, he began, upon that gibbet, the divine life which he was to live, through endless ages, in the hearts of mankind.” (Page 427.)

“Rest now in thy glory, noble founder of the New Law! Thy mission is accomplished, thy Divinity established. Henceforth thou shalt behold, from the summit of thy divine peace, the infinite consequences of thy acts. At the price of a few hours of suffering, which have not even touched thy great soul, thou hast purchased the most complete immortality”

During thousands of years, the world will extol thee. Banner of our contradictions, thou wilt be the sign around which will rage the fiercest contests. More living, more beloved, a thousand times, when thou hast passed away, than during the days of thy pilgrimage here below; thou wilt become the corner-stone of humanity, so that to remove thy name from the world would be to shake it to its foundations. Between thee and God, men will no longer distinguish. Triumphant conqueror of death, take possession of thy kingdom, whither shall follow thee, by the royal road thou hast traced, the adorers of all time!" (Page 426.)

The above are some notes of the celestial melody; I admit that I am moved even to tears, as I collect and transcribe them.

I ask myself, how any human heart can fail to be touched by such true and noble beauty of expression.

I adore my Divine Master, and embrace His hands and His feet. I entreat Him to save us; and to purify with His blood, not only me, His wretched follower, but

these, His enemies, so blind, and so deeply to be pitied.

I ask myself, how a man, capable of expressing such sentiments as these, can have written the passages that I have quoted elsewhere—how one who had in his possession a diamond of such price can have failed to appreciate his treasure—how he can have broken it in pieces, and mingled with it the vilest dust.

I ask myself, how the man, who has even dimly discerned such an image of Our Lord, can be capable of breaking it into fragments, scattering them here and there, and even defacing with stains those parts which retained their form.

I have here cited no passage from which I have not had to remove some disfiguring stain. I have been compelled to take each assertion singly, to clear it from the surrounding mass of falsehood, and to separate it from its converse with which it was invariably confounded.

I have had to cleanse, as it were, the features of Our Divine Lord; to remove the traces of insults similar to those detailed in the Gospel. I have had to wash away the fresh stains of blood flow

ing from wounds inflicted by new thorns, from bruises produced yesterday by renewed blows.

But why is this? How has it so happened? "*No man,*" says Our Lord in the Gospel, "*can work a miracle in My name, and can soon speak ill of Me.*"

I ask myself again, how he who wrote what we have just read, can also have written what follows.

Amidst the torrent of insults which flows from the pen of this man—this man who utters in the same breath maledictions and blessings, I have selected the following, which may be considered to correspond to the "*blows and insults*" of the Gospel narrative.

"*A young villager.....*" (Page 40.)

"*Artless expressions.....*" (Page 388.)

"*More or less of a sophist.....His insipid arguments.....His very weak reasoning.*" (Page 345.)

"*His singular political economy.....*" (Page 173.)

"*His strange style of preaching.....*" (Page 301.)

"*In some respects a revolutionist.....*" (Page 127.)

"The visionary schemes included in his plan." (Page 123.)

"His views were in a great measure obscured....." (Page 120.)

"The germ of real fanaticism....." (Page 826.)

"Acts which would, at the present day, be considered symptoms of delusion, or madness." (Page 266.)

"Shows glimpses of a gloomy resentment against his enemies." (Page 371.)

"Days passed in dispute and bitterness." (Page 345.)

"An excessively passionate temperament, which carried him incessantly beyond the bounds of human nature." (Page 318.)

"Urgent and imperative, he suffered no opposition." (Page 319.)

"Perpetual self-assertion, which appeared somewhat fastidious." (Page 344.)

"It is probable that many of his faults have been concealed." (Page 458.)

Can we doubt that this man has personally insulted each one of us, in thus insulting the Divine Person of Our Lord?

It was reserved for the Saviour to fall, in these latter times, into the hands of Sophists. Hitherto, he had not bee

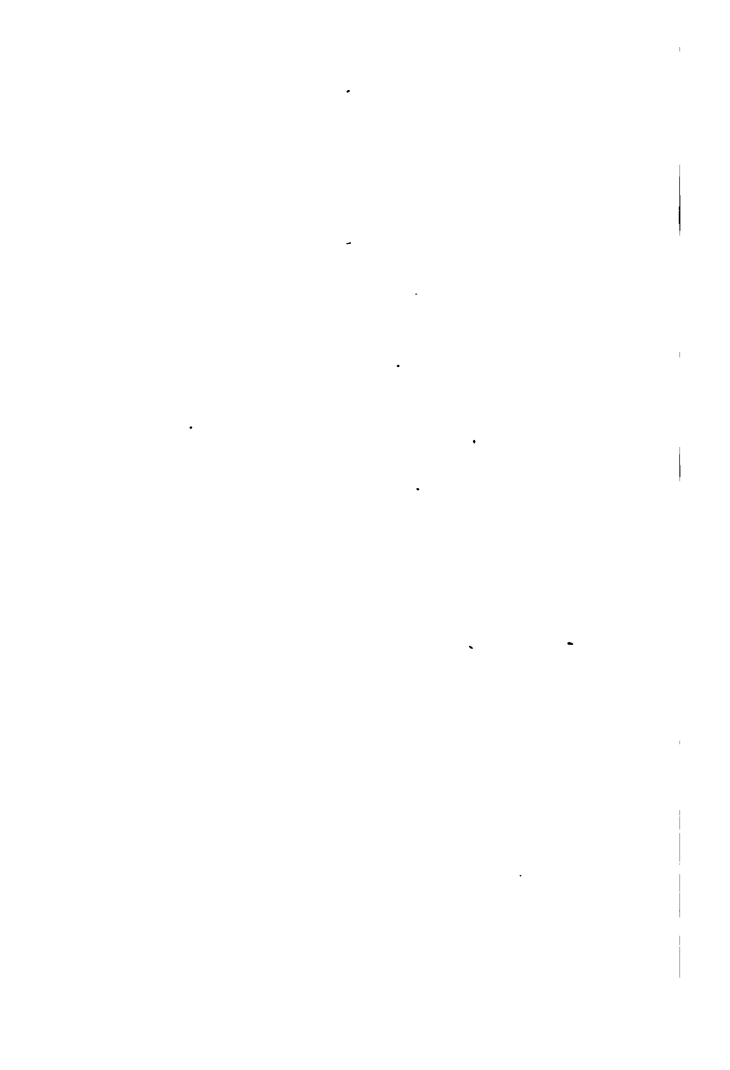
insulted, saluted, and struck, at one and the same time.

These men say: Hail! oh, King of mankind! and, at the same moment, they strike Him. But they salute Him with reserve, and they strike with moderation. They are the advocates of identity; and with them, salutations and insults are one and the same thing.

This however is new to us, since, for two thousand years, the monstrous prodigy of a school of sophistry has been unknown in the history of the human mind.

PART II.

ON THE TRUE PORTRAIT OF OUR LORD.



CHAPTER I.

A CANDID WRITER OF RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

Let us now glance at the other side of the question.

Let us consider the amount of philosophical discussion that has gone on since the commencement of the Christian era, and the extent to which criticism has been carried during the last two centuries, especially our own, and let us inquire what has been their result with regard to Christ, the only Son of God, the God made Man, as exhibited, not in the faith of the multitude, but in the judgment of advanced science.

I.

Nothing can be more evident than the fact that, at this very moment, a feeling of enthusiasm for the Person and the Mission of Christ—of Christ considered

as Man—is rapidly gaining ground ; and this solely through admiration of His perfect Human Nature, and notwithstanding the obdurate denials of criticism, and the late excesses of sophistry.

If we consider our Lord Jesus Christ as one like to us, and contemplate His Humanity alone, apart from His Divinity—which, be it remembered, is perfectly orthodox—we discover, every moment, some new and attractive beauty. This meditation and contemplation of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ, considered in itself, has been perhaps too much neglected by many Christians, who have accustomed themselves to see only the Divine Nature in Christ.

We should recollect how deeply St. Teresa deplores the error and the illusion of those false mystics, who fancy they rise to a state of contemplation when they lose sight of the Humanity of Jesus Christ. Never, she says, should the highest contemplation detach itself from the adorable Humanity of our crucified Lord. It is the most dangerous illusion.

Her views on this point are supported

by theologians, and particularly by Bossuet.*

And it may be that for those of the present time it is destined to enter on a deeper study of the Human Nature of the Saviour, to obtain a closer insight into His Human Heart, His Human Soul, His Human Mind. The Church, we see by many signs, is gradually leading her children towards this end. And many who are not of the Church, particularly in Germany, during the last quarter of a century, have appeared sometimes to forget and deny the Divinity of our Lord, only to express more enthusiastic admiration for His Sacred Humanity. I pity

* See particularly, *Instruction sur les Etats d'Oraison*, livre ii., in which Bossuet says, amongst other things, in speaking of the Mystics: "I must warn you that these doctors are far more extravagant in their views than those of whom St. Teresa speaks, and of whose sentiments she cannot approve, when they say, too generally, that the Humanity of Jesus Christ is an obstacle to contemplation. 'As the clay falls,' say they, 'when the eyes of the blind are opened, so does His Humanity fade away in the attempt to reach His Divinity.' Therefore, according to these doctors," continues Bossuet, "the Humanity of Jesus Christ is the clay which we must wash off, in order to open our eyes to contemplation. Is there any use in seeking an explanation of such senseless words, and is it possible to trace the origin of such a singular idea?"

those who can thus divide the Christ; but I say that if they persevere in contemplating His human features with reverence and love, it will perhaps be given them, at length, to see and find God in the semblance of the perfect and incomparable Man. Like St. Thomas, they will emerge from the darkness of incredulity, on seeing His hands, His face, His side, and the places of the nails: *et locum clavorum*. And as St. Augustine says of the incredulous apostle: "He saw the Man, and confessed the God." *Hominem vidit, Deum confessus est*. So the philosophers of this age, if they reach the point of seeing and comprehending that Man, ever living and ever reigning, although still covered with wounds, and crowned with thorns, may end also by exclaiming, "My Lord and my God." *Dominus meus, et Deus meus*. (John xx. 28.)

It is not many days since I became aware of a singular and touching fact. The "*Life of Jesus*," that tissue of inconsistencies and errors, teeming, as it is, with outrages against our Lord, contains, nevertheless, ten or twelve pages

expressive of admiration and homage. Through these pages we trace some of the features of Jesus, faded indeed, and tarnished exceedingly, but still of extraordinary and surpassing beauty.

Now it happens that I have lately met persons, who, of the entire book, have noticed or understood only these very pages. For them it contained nothing else; all the rest was effaced by the brilliancy of the halo encircling the features of our Lord.

And, in effect, if these passages express a truth, the rest must fade into insignificance; for the mind cannot accept or retain two incompatible ideas. The disunion of characters is effected more clearly in the mind of the reader than in the book itself. While one sees, and joins in the insults, another will discern only the praise, but neither will be able to conceive the two together.

What strikes me forcibly here is the supreme power of that singular beauty of which some shattered and disfigured features are sufficient to adorn a book, which would otherwise be absolutely insupportable. What would have been

the result had the author fully comprehended the compass of his subject, and in order the better to set aside the Divinity of Christ, represented His humanity in all the splendour of its brightness?

Thus might he have written a really dangerous book, a book which I should have feared. But what! I am already tempted to efface these last words. Would the book have been then really more dangerous? Even such as it is, it glorifies our Lord by the reaction which it effects, as did the blows, the insults, and the cross. It glorifies Him even by the few passages which may be expressed by the words of the Gospel: "Hail, King of the Jews!" And had it been such as I have described, the denial of His Divinity would have been of no avail in presence of the adorable beauty of His Humanity. So great, so mighty is He, that every act of ours only serves to bring out into stronger relief His Divine attributes—*sorte tamen inæquali*. Whether we worship Him, or crucify Him, we still enhance His glory.

When I see the powerful effect produced on many minds by words such as

these, founded on our own knowledge of Christ in His Humanity, when I see the halo of brightness which surrounds even these dispersed and disfigured fragments, I turn to the representation of Christ, as sketched by M. Ewald, to whom M. Renan is evidently indebted for the chief beauties of his work, and I ask myself what impression this portrait would leave on my readers.

M. Ewald is certainly not one of us; but if what he writes of our Lord is true, if Jesus Christ is really such a Man as we find described by this intelligent and religious thinker, we must conclude that all may be deduced from this fact, and that what the Church teaches concerning Him can never more be disputed.

I will endeavour, therefore, to reproduce here this admirable portrait of our Lord, that my readers may have an opportunity of judging of its effect.

And we shall see if those speak truth who assert that the holy presence and the human beauty of the Saviour are alone sufficient to establish the dogma of the Incarnation, and to oblige our reason to confess God in the Man.

II.

M. Ewald is, in my opinion, a great and truthful delineator of history, and particularly of religious history. His picture of the life and character of our Lord Jesus Christ is one of the finest literary portraits of our time, and these pages possess the peculiar interest of expressing precisely the present views of German science, as discussed by the rationalistic school.

M. Ewald, I repeat, is not one of us. He sometimes strikes such blows at the Catholic Church as prove to me that he does not know us. But he loves Jesus Christ with all his heart, and according to his knowledge; and the portrait sketched by him of our beloved Master differs as widely from the shameful two-sided and contradictory representation set forth in the "*Life of Jesus*," as did the act of Veronica from that of the soldiers who cried, "Hail, King of the Jews!" even while they gave Him blows.

That my readers may be enabled the better to judge of the difference between

the two, I mean, before presenting them with extracts from M. Ewald's work, to let them read the opinion expressed by the latter on M. Renan's "*Life of Jesus*."

I take the following from an article by M. Ewald, now before me. *

"We cannot, unfortunately, assert that M. Renan has attained the level of his subject, or that he has succeeded in discovering the right point of view from which to contemplate, and calmly describe, I will not say its incomparable sublimity, but even its manifest and simple truth. The character of the Christ stands alone in the history of the world, immeasurably surpassing any other that can be supposed, even distantly, to resemble it. No one of those who lived before his coming was, in any respect his equal—no other, in later times, ever could, or ever can be, compared with him.

"He is the Christ—the only Messiah—the expected Saviour—the flower and the fruit of the history of mankind."

This it is that M. Renan does not per-

* *Journal des Savants de Göttingue*. Août 5, 1868.

ceive, consequently, he is not capable of comprehending the character of our Lord.

“That is to say, that he cannot comprehend any thing of his advent, of his discourses, his actions, his sufferings, or his victory. He does not possess that intuitive perception of the sublime superiority of the Christ, which alone could have rendered him capable of seeing and depicting his character in the full light of historical truth.

“The insurmountable difficulty which the subject presents to the understanding of this man is the absolute perfection of the Christ of history—the power and singleness of his mind—his superiority over all created beings—his singular gifts, more wonderful, a thousand times, than any miracle—these are an enigma which M. Renan cannot solve; and therefore it is that, with the strangest inconsistency, he mingles with this record of incomparable and sublime purity, thoughts and imaginations the falsest, the basest, and, let me add, the most unworthy, that can be conceived.” (p. 1205.)

“The sublimity of this history of the life of Christ is lost on him: he can trace

neither its connection nor its development. Never yet did the public life of any human being develop itself so completely, notwithstanding the most terrible vicissitudes, in the accomplishment of a purpose—starting with a single thought—a single impulse—and tending constantly towards one only end. Never did any other life present such a wondrous picture of changeless and simple purity. But the light of the history is lost on this author; to him it seems filled with sad failures and contradictions, existing only in his own diseased imagination, which appears truly in this instance, worse and more depraved than it can possibly be in fact.” (Page 1206.)

What can be the causes, asks the critic, which keep the author so far beneath the level of his subject—“of that subject which he has chosen of his own free will?”

The first is, that he has not learned to consider Jesus Christ in connection with the history of Israel.

“Now, it is otherwise wholly impossible to conceive or appreciate the Christ of history; for he is but the highe

flower, and so far as the entire fruit may be said to exist in a single individual, at the same time the fruit of that great historical tree. He is the fulness of its development—the one who was to come—the one whose advent, during long ages, was foreseen and expected, but who, nevertheless, when he did come, was unrecognized: as we might fail to identify a flower, starting into life, with the ideal picture we had previously formed, from the inspection of its leaves and branches. But these are feeble comparisons, if it be indeed true that we have here, before our eyes, the historical example of the highest degree of excellence that the mind can conceive—a degree of excellence attained, during the whole course of time, only by this one man, and comprehending the most entire agreement, the most intimate union of the providential and necessary laws of God with the purest and most perfect human liberty — both working together for the accomplishment of the highest mission human and divine.” (Page 1209.)

“No acquaintance, however intimate, with the events of these twenty centuries,

would be in itself sufficient for the comprehension of the mission of Christ, historically considered. The mission of Christ, unfolded in the full light of history, is a something apart in itself, and not to be accounted for or explained, either by anterior facts, or by the hopes and presentiments of antiquity. It is the real and personal work of Jesus Christ, purely and fully the act of his own free will."

These truths the author does not comprehend, "and this is one of the principal causes which keep him so far removed from the grandeur and simplicity of his subject." (Page 1210.)

"The critic asserts that another cause to which may be attributed the failure of this book, is to be found in the strange principles advocated so constantly in its pages. We find an example of these in that scandalous passage* "which evidently implies," says M. Ewald, "that nothing really great has ever been accomplished in the world."

Here is the passage referred to.

* Vie de Jésus, p. 253.

"History is impossible," says M. Renan, "if we do not fully admit that there are many standards of sincerity. It is easy for us, powerless as we are, to call this falsehood, and proud of our timid honesty, to treat with contempt the heroes who have accepted the battle of life under other conditions. When we have effected by our scruples what they accomplished by their falsehoods, we shall have the right to be severe upon them. The guilt, in such a case, rests with human nature, which seeks to be deceived."

"This is sufficient," adds M. Ewald, "to enable us in Germany to comprehend the light in which M. Renan considers all human history, and to see how far such distorted views must disqualify him for forming any judgment with regard to Jesus Christ." (Page 1212.)

M. Renan supposes, continues the critic, "that at all times, and in all places, the characteristics of the individual depend on the spirit of his age and of his race. He asserts that truth is but little valued by the Oriental, who sees all

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through the medium of his passions, his interests, and his prejudices.

"Now any one acquainted with the history of the East must know that this is absolutely false. How then does he dare to apply such a principle in judging and describing the Christ? If throughout the records of history, we can point out a single individual who may be said to lean upon a rock of stern and absolute truth, that individual is Jesus Christ. To rest upon the truth was but the necessary commencement of his mission, it would have availed him little only to avoid trampling it underfoot. Again, if there ever existed a man absolutely free from every species of weakness or taint of nationality, that man was Jesus Christ." (Page 1213.)

"Let any one who wishes to see how far M. Renan denies Jesus Christ read for himself the chapter on miracles."

Here we will pause. "It is repugnant to us to follow in detail the innumerable errors, errors so base and so unworthy, which he commits in attempting to discuss the spirit and the mission of Christ." (Page 1214.)

"But we cannot pass over his eulogi

on the work of Strauss, that book which in Germany has long since been consigned to merited oblivion, that book which has been rejected by the highest German science as wholly unworthy of its subject, and which never made even a transient impression, save on men destitute of scientific knowledge, and on the enemies of Christianity." (Page 1214.)

"At a time when the stupid errors of this school have been fully exposed in Germany, at least in the opinion of all intelligent men, we have M. Renan returning to them. It is because he holds still to the school of Tubingen that he hesitates with regard to the authenticity of the Gospel of St. John, which is obstinately denied by these blind philosophers. Doubtless those who understood the question from the beginning, and who knew the origin of the dispute, could not hesitate for a moment. But it is well to know that the violence of the attack only led to the defeat of the error, and that, for the last ten or twelve years, the question has been so clearly decided that no man now, unless with a full consciousness of his responsibility, he choose to reject

the truth and accept the falsehood, will dare to assert that the fourth Gospel is not the work of the apostle St. John." (Page 1216.)

"If we glance now at those passages of M. Renan's work which may be said to possess any literary merit, we shall find that they are all, without exception, derived from German authors, taken, in fact, from works recently published in Germany. It is not in order to lay claim to an honour, which, taking the book before us as a whole, would be very poor indeed, that we notice this ; but we cannot avoid expressing our astonishment at finding that M. Renan has here departed from his usual custom, and refrained from citing his authorities, and that, throughout his book, he has not, in a single instance, referred to those of our works which relate to the subject of which he treats."* (Page 1218.)

* Before the appearance of this review, we had already compared M. Renan's "*Life of Jesus*" with the German text of M. Ewald's "*History of Christ*," and we had amply verified what the latter complains of here. All the finest passages of M. Renan on the greatness and beauty of the character and of the mission of our Lord, are but a repetition of the ideas of M. Ewald. We pre-

CHAPTER II.

ON THE TRUE REPRESENTATION OF
THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

I.

Besides this shameful representation of Our Divine Lord—inconsistent, false, and contradictory as it is—odious, as heaping insults on Him whom even our adversaries admit to have been the greatest of living men—let us place the admirable portrait of the Saviour, which we find traced by an author of upright and enlightened mind, endowed with the richest gifts of science.

I will but translate, and lay before you a few passages of M. Ewald's work, entitled : "*The History of Christ.*"

ticularly remarked the opening of one chapter, with its marginal notes, copied in full from M. Ewald's book, although the latter is not cited by M. Renan. This, it is true, is no great crime in dealing with historical questions ; but we make the remark in confirmation of the assertion of M. Ewald.

"The entire question is this: Is it true that, in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, is exemplified the highest and purest perfection, human and divine, that can possibly exist upon earth?"

"Did he, during his life, prove constantly victorious over wrong and evil, although subject, in all things, to the laws of this world, and of our human nature?"

"Although engaged in an incessant struggle with the fearful and rising waves of the tide of human wickedness, was he not, throughout his life, wholly free from its contagion?"

"Did he, coming directly from God, establish the foundation of the kingdom of God, for Israel and for all nations—for all men, and for all time?"

"Such are the conclusions resulting from the closest researches of science.

"What argument remains to unbelievers whilst this life of Christ stands forth, in all its reality, before their eyes—whilst every fresh research—every new scientific movement—serves but to place its truth in a clearer light, and the sublimity of

the lesson which it teaches becomes more striking from day to day?

“Yes—this life is, for all ages, and even for eternity, a light for the revelation of all mankind. Who that has once discerned this light can continue to love error? Who that has once felt its influence can yield to discouragement or despair? And when is the time—where the place—to which its rays do not penetrate? whose the heart on which this light of revelation does not shine?”

II.

“The Christ appears—his mission on earth begins—and forthwith, all around him becomes, through his influence, a living furnace, from which issue acts and proofs of divine regeneration—renewed health and vigour of soul, and a power of healing extending from the soul to the body, and curing the deepest and deadliest wounds of both.

“In his hands, the lowest things are transformed, and the passing events of human life become a means of instilling a permanent truth. In the light of his

teaching, all human history becomes the history of religion—of the true and supreme faith. But that which had been taught but darkly and doubtingly by the records of past ages—that which was to be shown dimly and obscurely in the history of centuries yet to come—was made strikingly evident by the most trifling events of the days and years of his dwelling among men.” (Page xiv.)

To return, however, to His power of healing:

“In all these cases of healing, he worked by his spirit—that sublime spirit which conducted him in all things, and which manifested itself most fully in his every act, his every word, in the whole course of his life, and throughout all his teaching.” (Page 223.)

“The spirit of Christ came then into perfect action; it worked with full force on the spirit of those who came to be healed. Conscious of his vivifying power, and, at the same time, filled with the purest and most loving faith in the Supreme and Heavenly Father of all salvation, he himself, before each act, would raise to heaven his luminous glance

in order thence to derive strength. He required from those whom he meant to succour, above all else, faith in the real presence of the kingdom of God, and in the might and virtue of God Himself. He could not, and would not heal, unless when he found such faith.

“This we must admit in order to comprehend the extraordinary effects of his acts. What might not have been possible when his sublime and efficacious faith came into contact with the belief of those souls who saw in him the Messiah? His action was creative, original, mighty in its efficacy, as was also his daily life—such a life as no man before him had ever lived. It would be impossible for us to form a sufficiently elevated idea of this portion of his mission. We must consider all the human race as ennobled by him, since it was his will to descend into the profound abyss of their sufferings.” (Page 225.)

“But besides these cures, which, according to all records, were his daily occupation, and of which the immense number is merely indicated in the Gospel, we must particularize other facts, yet more

striking. Such are the raising the dead to life—the thousands fed with a few loaves and fishes—the changing of water into wine—the stilling of the tempest—the walking on the waters—and the cures effected at a distance by the mere radiation of his spirit. All these facts are included in the primitive records, as given by the Evangelists. They indicate the moments of his greatest power over the external world. For Jesus Christ, the work of each day was but a series of acts of sublime power. What therefore must have been, at certain moments, the impulse of that force, so mighty even in its rest? We have no reason to suppose any limit to the efficacy of the spirit—nor to decide arbitrarily on the extent of its power in the person of Jesus Christ.

“Similar periods of mighty enthusiasm, of triumphant force, and sublime healing power, are to be found recorded, at intervals, in the Old Testament. For whenever true religion appears, it brings a heavenly joy, re-animating all things—a wondrous vigour, capable of any effort—and convincing manifestations of divine strength and assistance. But never, hitherto, had

the foundation of even the work of salvation been so established. Never had the hope of divine regeneration, and the plenitude of celestial joy filled, in the same degree, the hearts of men." (Page xiv.)

III.

"He then had appeared who was the Messiah, expected, at that time, amongst the chosen people of God: and he had not only accomplished all that had been exacted by the prophecies taken in their fullest sense; but his words, and his deeds—his sufferings and his death—had effected far more than the prophets had announced or foreseen." (Page 498.)

"To him referred that prophetic hope which had been spread, from the most remote antiquity, amongst the nations of the earth, but with peculiar strength and clearness in Israel—a hope which had become, in later times, as manifest as the light, and which maintained that a man should come, free from every stain of sin and error, who, overcoming the mass of evil and depravity accumulated since the infancy of the human race, should triumph

over all, and accomplish perfectly the will of God. Now we see that the entire life of Christ was but the fulfilment of this universal expectation." (Page 499.)

"But the prophets did not only fore-show in him an isolated man, who should have to accomplish a purely personal work. They foretold, in common with all the primitive history of Israel, the advent of one who, passing unscathed through the ordeal of this world's sin, should accomplish, in all things, the most pure will of God, and should thus become the ruler of all men, teaching them, by his example, to fulfil the Divine will, and founding a communion of souls subject to absolute religious truth.

"And such, in effect, was the perfection with which the Christ accomplished this two-fold mission, that it is impossible to say whether he is greater as founder and head of this communion of souls united to God, or simply as man, in the presence of the Eternal Father."

IV.

“In him was renewed and concentrated, during these last days of the kingdom of Israel, the prophetic virtue of the primitive times—the original basis, on which rests the foundation of the true religion. Gifted with a spirit of prophecy unknown on earth, since the days of Moses, he uttered truths hitherto unrevealed, with a certainty of divine authority which carried conviction to the minds of his hearers; and this without any trace of the violence which mingled with the ancient prophetic action, for the last remnant of the old form had passed away. He alone could offer to mankind the doctrines of religion, surrounded only with their own light—enhanced by no attraction save that of their intrinsic excellence. His words were nothing more than the simplest form of human language, glorified by the certainty of inspiration, and the calm dignity of truth.” (Page 500.)

“Thus did he found the eternal kingdom of the true and perfect religion, which was to go forth from Israel, and to in-

clude, in time to come, all nations and all men." (Page 501.)

"In him was also renewed the ancient sacerdotal virtue, mediating between man and God—the power of reconciling with God, man purified from sin, but no longer restrained by the ancient forms of the external law.

"And all these great powers of the mind, which had hitherto appeared on earth only in a dispersed form, were united and concentrated in him, as they could never before have been in any individual; for the gifts and virtues of the true and perfect religion, to which such attributes peculiarly belong, were, in fact, developed in him alone. Such as the true religion then appeared, it had been conceived in the mind of God from the beginning of Creation—such as it then appeared, it had been decreed that it should appear, not only at that exact point of space, and at that period of time, but in the midst of that people, and through the intervention of that one man.

"To the old religion, true in fact, but still imperfect, he brought precisely that of which those to whom it had been

entrusted stood in need—that towards which all their desires had long tended, namely, the immoveable serenity, the strength and triumphant activity of the purest divine love—a love penetrating every thought and every action—accomplishing every law, good, but unfulfilled, of the past—a love ever-living, ever awake to each fresh light, each new obligation—a love manifesting itself to the world by the government of mankind, by helpful work, by directing wisdom, but, above all, by humble obedience, and austere and heroic self-sacrifice. Thus was he the son of God as no other has ever been; thus was he, in this mortal body, and in an obscure life, the pure splendour and the glorious image of the Eternal.

“Thus also may the Christ be called the Word of God, since his entire existence, his every act, and all his words bear the direct impress of heavenly inspiration, since he alone amongst men could elucidate the hidden mysteries of Divine Wisdom, and manifest to the world, by means of a revelation, eternal, imperishable, and all-powerful, the inmost spirit of the work of God.” (Page 502.)

“Thus is he the only true Messiah, the eternal ruler of the kingdom of God—that kingdom which he first made known to the world. Thus is he the one only Lord and Guide, to be followed by every man moved by the spirit of religion—every man who seeks God, purely and perfectly, in all his thoughts, his acts, and his sufferings.

“But is perfection possible to this our imperfect humanity? Is immortality within reach of this mortal and perishable state?

“This Jesus has proved beyond any possibility of doubt. He will teach it eternally to the hearts and minds of those who do not shun his light.

“But whilst he offered to the world the pure light and the infinite blessings of virtue, that world overwhelmed him with its hatred, as if to prove if he were truly the hero and the saint, great and mighty, strong to suffer what no other before him had ever endured. Even at this fearful crisis he never wavered for an instant. He had come to conquer all in patience, to suffer and to die; and he

proved himself mighty in endurance, as well as in labour and teaching.

“But if he suffered the last agonies abandoned by all, he was not forsaken of God. By the aid of Divine power he had accomplished what was appointed to him, and borne all that it was decreed he should endure; and by the same aid he rose from the lowest depths of humiliation, to gain the most complete victory.

“Behold him then, crushed, so far as the depravity of men could crush him, as if he were the worst of criminals; he to whom no shadow of sin could be imputed, whether he were considered as a man, like to other men, or recognised as the true Messiah, greater than any created being.” (Page 496.)

“Yes, he who for so many centuries had been expected as the Saviour, the blessed hope of Israel, was rejected and insulted, when he came at his appointed time, by the chiefs of the nation, and the multitude of the people of God.

“He who had come to bring salvation to this people and to all nations, he who alone could teach mankind to cultivate and ripen the seeds of virtue on

this our earth, he was judged by the high authorities of Israel and of Paganism, and stigmatized as the most dangerous seducer of the human race.

“He who, in presence of all the error, the sin, the disorder, and the fierce depravity accumulated by the powers of evil from the first ages of the world, and during all time, had opposed to that mass of horrors, only consummate wisdom, infinite love, and untiring meekness, found himself overwhelmed by the impure wave, in which the sins of hardened Israel, and those of senseless and sensual Paganism, had merged, in order to destroy him.

“In the midst of that nation, which, more than all others, should have been a holy people, the beloved people of God, error and sin had accumulated and fermented during fifteen centuries; and now the rancour and the fury of all these inveterate errors, all these grievous sins, became concentrated in one vast mass of iniquity, destined to overwhelm the Christ.

“He did not, like St. John the Baptist, fall a victim to the transitory rage of

the populace ; he suffered solely for the life of Israel, for the cause of the kingdom of God, and of the true communion of religious faith. It was at the most critical moment for the establishment of this holy communion of faith, and the decision of its future destiny, that the concentrated wrath and fury of the old world fell, as I have said, on him, poor, forsaken, defenceless, as he was, destitute of human strength, and of earthly glory. The object of the attack was to destroy, in his person, the founder of the sect to which had been confided absolute religious truth, in order to overthrow, at the same time, in its origin, the religion which, as yet, was scarcely established.

“But precisely at the moment when this hidden sovereign of the true kingdom of God had just appeared, unrecognised by men, upon the earth, when the Divine kingdom, as yet scarcely established, seemed to share in the annihilation of its founder, it proved its invincible strength by miracles ; and from the tomb of its Lord, of that Lord put to death for the sins of mankind, the glorious king-

dom arose to eternal life and boundless splendour.

“The death and entombment of Jesus Christ, were historical events which took place within a brief space of time; but rapidly as they passed, they marked the boundary separating the old world from the new. The old world certainly did not terminate before the time of Jesus Christ; but its history may be said to have closed with his tomb.”

Thence we may date the commencement of the new era.

CHAPTER III.

RESULT OF THE STUDY OF THE TRUE PORTRAIT OF OUR LORD.

I.

I beg of the reader who has just meditated, doubtless with delight and astonishment, on the admirable passages last quoted, to consider that they express what is called *the latest state of science* in Germany, particularly amongst rationalists.

M. Ewald is now perhaps the first Hebrew and Oriental scholar in Europe, and one of those who have studied most deeply the history of Israel, without a knowledge of which, as he justly says in speaking of M. Renan, it is impossible to comprehend that of Jesus Christ.*

Now this learned historian has not, in the present instance, the least intention of writing in a poetically religious style. He declares, with reason, that he grounds all his assertions on exact historical truth, and he says, "This is exactly the result of all the minute researches of German science."

These pages are a scientific summary of philology, of true philosophy, and of profound psychology, the result of a long and assiduous comparison of all the facts and all the texts of sacred and profane history. There are, I know, defective points in this summary of comparative science; and we may even go farther, for there is matter for centuries of meditation and progress in the extended study

* His *History of Christ*, forms the fifth volume of his *History of the People of Israel*.

of Jesus Christ and of His mission. But I say plainly that the results of actual rationalistic science, as represented by M. Ewald, although still imperfect, are admirable in their degree. The force of truth, and the beauty of the human mind are therein displayed. True philosophers, men of real science and of absolute sincerity, are now returning to the primitive views of those great minds, who first contemplated the greatest of all historical facts, the fact of the Gospel. They are returning to the early Fathers, and to St. Paul. "It is thus," says M. Ewald, "that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, as no other had ever been, and that He was, in this mortal body, and transitory life, the pure splendour and the glorious image of the Eternal."

This is the language of the Fathers, who apply to Jesus Christ the ancient text: "*A pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty God.*"* These words are like the words of St. Paul, who calls the Son, "the image of the invisible God;"

* *Sapientia emanatio quædam est claritatis omnipotentis Dei sincera....Cendor est enim lucis æternæ....*
(Wisdom vii. 25-20)

(*Imago Dei invisibilis*. Col. i. 15,) and elsewhere, "the brightness of the glory, and the figure of the substance of the Father." (*Cum sit splendor gloriæ et figura substantiæ ejus*. Heb. i. 3.)

After the prolonged controversy, the wearisome investigations, carried on by both sides, we find men returning to the views of our first fathers, the founders of the new world. In all cases, the first observers are those who see the most clearly; and the science of the philosophers who arrive later in the field consists in returning, after a careful analysis, to the intuitions of those who preceded them. Thus, Aristotle and Plato had a clearer perception of the truths and proportions of logical science than Bacon and Descartes. These last saw each a chapter; Aristotle and Plato saw it as a whole. In like manner, those who saw Christianity in its true light and just proportions were St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John. It is to them that we must return, and that science, at the present moment, does return.

True science, amongst orthodox thinkers, never swerved from the right path;

while, in the case of others, it wandered from it, and despised and rejected its guidance, only to seek it again in our own day, with infinite labour and long study. The laborious baptism of science thus expiates the sin of incredulity.

The last step in philosophical criticism must always be a return to the great lights of the early days of philosophy, as the last step in true religious criticism must be a return to the Apostles and the Fathers of primitive Christianity.

And this can only be attained by deep and lengthened study, which, however, will not lose its reward; for, in entering into the labours of others, we are enabled to reap what they have sown. We are now drawing near this end, or at least we may consider that we draw near it when reason, attention, and respect, once more find their place amongst us. These are the foundation of true criticism—of that criticism which leads to the detection of falsehood, and the perception and love of truth. We shall then, I repeat, by simply following the movement of history, attain the results of scientific research in religion, as well as in philosophy.

IV.

But what, according to us, is deficient, not only in the pages of M. Renan, but even in those of M. Ewald? They want the clear confession of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, in its proper theological form. I have this day been much moved at hearing of the conversion of an educated and intelligent man to faith in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, through the study of the best pages of M. Renan. I was already aware that this "*Life of Jesus*" had brought back souls to the true faith through the horror and disgust inspired by the outrages lavished on our Lord in its dark pages. But I speak now of a return to faith directly brought about by the *clear-obscure* of those chapters which speak of Him with reverence and admiration. This is sufficient, exclaims the unbeliever, I acknowledge the Divinity of Christ!

And now, I ask, in all sincerity, if it is really true, as the author says, in the words of the Gospel, that "*no man ever spoke like this man*"—that "*the true words of Christ reveal themselves, so to*

speak, spontaneously”—that they “*vibrate to the touch*”—and that “*a kind of splendour, mild yet terrible—a divine strength—emphasizes them, and detaches them from the context*”—if it is true that “*Jesus became the object, and fixed the starting-point of the future faith of mankind*”—if it is true that “*when Jesus was about to appear, in Judea, and the entire world, expectation was at its height*”—if “*he merited the divine rank decreed to him*”—if “*he is without equal*”—because He is “*for all eternity, the true creator of the peace of the soul, the great consoler of life*”—if it is true that “*he founded the pure worship, which all elevated souls will practise until the end of time*”—if He is the “*founder of eternal religion*”—if He really “*brought into the world the absolute religion—which cannot be different in other planets, wherever beings dwell gifted with reason and morality*”—if He “*founded the true kingdom of God—laid down the rules of the eternal morality which saved mankind*”—and “*originated a new state of humanity*”—if “*each one of us owes to him that which is best in himself*”—if He is “*th*

finished model, in which all suffering souls will meditate for their strength and consolation"—if being "*the triumphant conqueror of death,*" He is in "*possession of his kingdom—whither have followed him, by the royal road that he has traced, the worshippers of all time*"—if He is really now "*a thousand times more living—a thousand times more beloved than during the days of his pilgrimage here below*"—if all this is really true, who, I ask, can then believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is but a man like to other men? If these real facts subsist immutably, notwithstanding all the difficulties propounded by criticism, I ask again, who is he that must not exclaim, like the incredulous apostle, "*My Lord and my God?*"

But what if, instead of referring to a book which mutilates the divine history in every possible way, we turn to that of M. Ewald—a truly learned work, which has followed and preserved so closely the most trifling details of fact?

Let us glance once more at the beautiful passages which have just been quoted. Let us, if possible, study the entire volume, which is written, throughout, in the

same spirit, and consider particularly the chapters which treat of the prophetic clear sight of our Lord—of His “*glance over all time*”—of His “*Messianic power of knowledge and speech*”—that which treats of “*his absolute force, creative, immense in its efficacy* ;” that force by means of which were effected the miracles recorded in the Gospels. If all these things are true, then it is impossible to see in the Christ, only a man, like to other men.

But if we weigh particularly certain expressions contained in this admirable book, we shall find what appears to be an equivalent to the dogma of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

What can He be who “*realizes in history the noblest idea that the mind can conceive* ?” What is the realization of the ideal, if not the incarnation of God ?

What is He whose work is “*the highest, divine, and human mission*”—He whose life was “*the highest and purest, divine and human*,” ever witnessed on earth ?

What can we infer from a life “*constantly victorious over error and sin* ?”

Can a man like other men be constant !

victorious over error and sin, and never, at any time, commit "*the slightest fault?*"

"*Is perfection possible to our human imperfection? Can the immortal, the eternal, descend to this perishable mortality?*" Now, "*this is visible in the person of Jesus Christ, to all those who do not shun his light.*"

And what again must we say of this Man, who alone is "the pure splendour and the glorious image of the *Eternal?*"

If science, which investigates all things, and criticism which contests every assertion, can arrive at no other conclusions than these, is it not clear that the human mind is about to reascend towards God, and towards the Christ, the true Ruler of all ages and of all men? Who can hinder us from proclaiming, in its proper form, the precise dogma of the Divinity of Jesus Christ? Can science oppose, or reason prevent it?

I will say here what does oppose it, at least in many minds. It is this—some imagine the form of the doctrine to be absolutely different from what it really is. Many suppose it to be absurd, and therefore reject it, with reason; but they

should, in the first instance, have studied its meaning.

They suppose that they are required to admit, in Jesus Christ, the identity of the divine nature and the human nature.

Is this our doctrine? So far from it, that to assert such a thing would be the most monstrous heresy.

Our doctrine, on the contrary, maintains the distinction—the absolute distinction—of the two natures in Jesus Christ.

The formula of our faith is this :

Duæ sunt in Christo naturæ integræ, distinctæ, inconfusæ, atque impermixtæ.

“There are in Christ *two natures*, ENTIRE, DISTINCT, which cannot be mixed nor confounded.”

But what then must we believe ?

We must believe that, in Jesus Christ, the two natures being always radically distinct, there is between these two natures—the divine nature and the human nature—a union which may be compared to the union of the soul and the body. This is even the comparison employed in the Catholic Creed.*

* The Creed of St. Athanasius says : “Sicut animæ

Now, I ask, if there is, in the whole scientific and intellectual world, a single fact, or a single truth, which should prevent our reason from admitting the possibility of an intimate union of the divine nature and the human nature, similar to the union of the soul and the body.

The world is filled with the advocates of identity, who maintain the real identity of God and the world—the metaphysical identity of the finite and the infinite—and these same men, when they are called on to admit, not the identity, absurd in itself, which they nevertheless maintain, but the union of real natures, radically distinct; these same minds, which have lost the sense of the distinction between beings and ideas, come forward and declare that reason will not permit them to admit such confusion!

What can we say to those whose minds are in such a state? But I address myself here to every man who has preserved the faculty of reason, and I ask if reason itself does not teach what follows.

rationalis, et caro unus est homo, ita Deus et homo unus est Christus.

All is not God, but all things depend on God. God is everywhere essentially and substantially present, in all things, whether corporal or spiritual.*

Nothing exists but by a certain necessary union with God Himself. This is the truth which pantheism has abused. But if the material molecule is evidently not united to God in the same manner as the free and intelligent mind—if, again, the low, dark, and depraved intellect is not united to God in the same degree as the great and holy soul which sees, loves, and adores Him—I will never believe that the one man, who is, and who will be to the end of time, the Guide and the Light of the world, who has visibly lived on our earth a life, at once divine and human, free from every stain of error and sin; I will never believe that this ideal type, realized in a mortal body and a human soul, is not united to God in a degree infinitely surpassing that in which I,

* This is an article of Catholic faith, as well as a necessary axiom of reason: *Deus est omnibus locis, rebusque omnibus spiritualibus, et corporalibus sua substantia, intime præsens*. See the statement of the articles of Catholic faith, at the end of *La Connaissance de Dieu*.

whose life has been scarcely anything but error, weakness, and sin—I, whose only support has been His example, His light, and His strength really present within me, am united to the same God.

And when the Catholic symbol says to me: “As the union of the soul with the body constitutes the man, so the union of God with the man constitutes Jesus Christ,” I conceive that this may be; and I desire that this may be; and I see nothing in reason or science to oppose it.

And when I perceive the hierarchy of beings around us, approaching, in gradation of rank, and by union of natures, nearer and nearer to perfection, ascending from the stone to the man, and then, through the religious aspirations of the man, tending, always and everywhere, upwards towards God; I say that if the dogma of the Man-God be propounded to me, I can see nothing in it but sublime beauty, and striking and admirable probability. And if to this condition of intellect, I add an upright will, all my being is opened to the influence of divine faith, to the work of God, who desires to regenerate my soul, and to give me,

in Jesus Christ, a participation in the divine and human life brought on earth by the incarnation of God.

Hence is developed an entire class of facts founded on positive experience ; facts appertaining to the religious life which interior observation can clearly discern, which inward conviction does not permit us to confound with the mere life of man, and which we must call the life of God in man.

This will be the subject of our concluding chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND OF CHRIST.

CONCLUSION.

I.

But these portraits of Our Lord are nothing. Words are of no avail. We must see and come in contact with Himself.

If we wish to seek truth, we must

divest ourselves of a grave illusion, common to all who read much, namely, the idea that all is comprised in the world of letters, that all may be accomplished by thought and study.

This is a great mistake : the real living truth is not to be found thus ; and he who does not understand this fact has not yet even made a beginning.

The above is an illusion similar to that which so long led the human mind astray in the study of the natural sciences. Philosophers sought wisdom only in books, and in their own intellects. They endeavoured to trace the mysteries of life by syllogisms founded on abstract propositions.

True science dates from the time when man began to turn his attention to nature, to contemplate its wonders, follow its guidance, and humbly obey its teaching. This truth was inculcated, with untiring eloquence, by Bacon. Thus did man engage in the pursuit of that real science which experience alone could teach him, to attain.

The knowledge of God and of Christ are to be attained at precisely the same

cost. We must seek God and Christ directly, we must follow them, and obey them with humility. We want that knowledge of God and of Christ which experience alone can teach us. But what is the knowledge of God? We have already said it. The knowledge of God consists in the practice of morality and religion.

Consider that, in every age, man has sought the knowledge of God. All the history of religion, as well as that of mysticism, demonstrates this fact. To what else can we attribute the belief of all nations, and particularly of poets and philosophers, in revelation and inspiration, and in the life of God in us? Do we not all feel the truth of this admirable line:

Est Deus in nobis: agitante calescimus illo.

God is within us: It is He who moves us, and who gives us the spark of life. The agreement, on this point, of philosophers and people, is a striking proof that the doctrine is a true one.

And I must here remark that the views of the ancient philosophers are more

satisfactory, on this subject, than those of the modern, because the former are disinterested. They are free from the passions excited in the modern world by the fierce religious warfare carried on around the cross of Our Lord, a warfare necessarily resulting from the real presence of true and active religion.

There was no reason why Aristotle should not see, or why he should conceal from others that he discerned in man "A life higher than the ordinary life, a life that man cannot live, unless something divine live in him."

But he, who in the beginning of our century, dared to affirm as a fact proved by psychological observation, and verified by mental experience, the existence in man of a life superior to the ordinary human life, of a life truly divine, whose rule, says Maine de Biran, is the Gospel, and whose laws and example are the words and the life of Christ, must have been characterised by a degree of sincerity amounting to heroism. It was after thirty years of study and observation that this noble-minded man, with the greatest and most philosophical courage, dared to

return scientifically, experimentally, and publicly, to the doctrine of the *Imitation*; on the "*Different Movements of Nature and Grace*."

Thus, philosophy as well as fact, reason as well as feeling, have sought, and will still seek, the knowledge of God.

This is the foundation of religious and philosophical science.

II.

On this point, we must clearly understand that no illusion is possible. Illusions exist only in the abstract life of literature. There, every falsehood, every error, every sophism, every passionate and blind prejudice, may find a place; but it is not so in the experimental search after God, any more than in the experimental study of nature. We must continually repeat that the experimental search after God consists in Morality and Religion, comprised in the single word which cannot deceive, Duty! Who can be deceived when he says: I take for the ground-work of my life—of my real life—exterior, interior, moral and intellectual,

philosophical and religious duty—duty, such as I now know it to be?

If there be certainty anywhere, it is here. This single effort, this one resolution, brings you to the knowledge of God, of that living God who exists in the conscience, who directs and sustains you, and who restrains you from doing evil, while leading you to good. Whilst the false mystical life is composed of chimerical imaginations and vain self-seeking, the true interior life, that life of duty which brings us into communion with God, is the total destruction of all illusions, the immediate and absolute certainty of an eternal foundation for our hope.

If you seek truth, and desire to attain the knowledge of God and of Christ, this must be your starting-point.

Whoever you may be, whatever be the actual state of your knowledge, your convictions, your faith, or your incredulity, you can and ought to say, now, and at all times: "I take for the principle of my life, and of my understanding, the practice and the knowledge of duty." This, I say, is the starting-point, the straight and certain road which leads to all good,

to the knowledge of the Father, and also to the knowledge of Christ.

And how is it that an upright will, tending always towards duty, must lead to the Father? Because that good-will and that struggle for duty are movements of which He is the first cause, and in which He continually co-operates. They are the effort to follow and obey Him, really present, and working within us. They are the experimental practice of His justice, His wisdom, and His goodness. They lead to prayer, attraction towards Him, and attention to His teaching. They include, in fact, adoration in spirit and in truth.

Perhaps, my brethren, some among you may have passed fifty years on earth without having once tried this practice of interior attention to God, adoration in spirit and in truth, silence and recollection in order to commune with your own soul, and to listen to the divine inspirations. It may be that you have never prayed to God, for one quarter of an hour, in spirit and in truth. There was silence in heaven for one half-hour, says the Holy Scripture. This half-hour of the silence

of heaven is perhaps unknown to you. It may never once have found a place in the whole course of your life.

I ask of each of you one quarter of an hour's silence this night, for your soul, and for God, said a great bishop, speaking to an assemblage of men. In the middle of the night a grave and venerable man sought the bishop, and said to him : "I have, for the first time in my life, given one quarter of an hour to silent meditation. I cannot put off until to-morrow telling you that I am changed. I belong henceforth to God, and to His eternal religion."

The silence of a quarter of an hour, which took place in the heaven of his soul, was a quarter of an hour's experience of God. All the occurrences of life, all the fluctuations of thought, all the torrent of secondary causes being for the moment set aside, the supreme Being, the first Cause, the creative and vivifying principle became in a manner perceptible to Him : as when, in a scientific observation, the experimentalist succeeds in suspending all extraneous influences, in order to concentrate his attention on that force

whose nature and laws he seeks to investigate. Read in the *Imitation*, that masterpiece of the experimental knowledge of God, the chapter, *De neglectu omnis creaturæ, ut Creator possit inveniri*.

The power of this simple and plain method, the silence of man and of nature in order to find God, surpasses all that can be imagined. If a man gifted with good sense and an upright will summon sufficient courage to shut himself up for a month, a week, even three days, and devote his attention to this one point; command the silence of man and of nature, in order that he may reach the origin and foundation of the soul, and of all spiritual things; I promise him that, if he have resolution to sound these mysteries, he will discover therein not only old things, but new.

You know, perhaps by experience, the astonishing vanity, the nothingness and sterility of a succession of years passed on the turbulent surface of life, amid the weighty cares of created things. Try now to learn the strange power, the wondrous fertility of a few days given up to God alone. Scarcely have you entered

on them when you find your soul held as if by an irresistible force. Some are terrified, some even fly from it, but those who persevere find regeneration. There is nothing in this that should surprise us. God is everywhere essentially and substantially present. Remove what distracts the attention, and God still remains.

Know, however, that if you do not seek this fixed point, this simple centre and foundation of all things, this intimate union with God, you are but as a grain of sand, or a dry leaf tossed about by every wind that blows; and that no superficial study, not even the wandering of a lifetime through the world of literature, will suffice, in such a case, to enlighten or instruct you.

III.

But I have not said all: I do not speak only of the knowledge of God, the experience of the Father, I wish to speak of the knowledge of God in His Incarnation, of that experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ that you can and ought to acquire,

It is to Himself that you must go ; you must seek Him in order that you may know Him by experience, and acquire certainty and true faith in the visible Ruler, the Guide, the Model, and Divine Regenerator of all mankind.

Dwell, in the first place, on those certain historical facts which are absolutely indisputable, namely : the fact of the existence of Christianity—that greatest revolution recorded in history—which divides the life of the human race into two periods, two eras, two distinct worlds, the old world and the new.

Start from the fact of the existence of a book, entitled *The New Testament*.

Consider, in connection with this fact, another, new, so to speak, and belonging to our own time ; that the latest condition of science, resulting from the universal denial of all truth by modern sophistry, is expressed as follows :

“The entire argument resolves itself into a single question. Is this admirable life of Christ, at once truly human and truly divine, which has founded the kingdom of God on earth, is this life, or is it not, real and historical ? But all our

scientific criticism, all our most minute researches, tend plainly to prove its reality. And every new investigation, each additional step in science, serves only to place its truth in a stronger light, and to demonstrate more forcibly the wonderful perfection and the divine inspiration of the Christ !”

Here then we have two great external facts which are absolutely certain, namely : the existence of Christ, and that of the New Testament ; the latter an inexhaustible treasure, in which, by the aid of investigation, criticism, and science, we discover ever-new beauties, a book which reveals the glories of Christ more brightly in proportion as we study its pages more closely.

This is the experimental and objective basis of the science of Christ.

Read the Gospels, and read them repeatedly. They are the truest and simplest of all historical records, and those which have been the most directly transmitted to us by eye-witnesses. The light of the countenance of Christ was engraved, so to speak, on the simple minds of those by whom it was cherished and

transmitted to us. Like images traced by the sun, which appear the truer in detail the nearer they are viewed, the wonderful Gospel narrative reveals more and more strikingly the beauty, the truth, and the majesty of Christ, in proportion as it is more deeply considered and more closely analyzed.

Therefore, if you wish to attain the knowledge of Christ, having first sought, by interior silence, the knowledge of the Father, you must try the assiduous reading of the Gospels, and meditation on them in the presence of God.

Then, having studied this divine portrait of the Model, the Founder, and the King of this new world to which we belong, you must dare, I repeat, to conceive the intention of approaching Him, and conversing with Him intimately, as one person with another.

Have we not reason to say that Jesus at this moment exists more truly, is a thousand times more living, a thousand times more loved, than He was during the days of His short pilgrimage here below?

Do you wish, dearly beloved, to know by experience if these are vain words, or

wonderful and blessed truths? Awaken the powers of your mind, and consider, in the first place, this: If the departed are not consigned to annihilation, have we not still some affinity with them? And are we to believe that the greatest, the most gifted of men, separated from this world by a glorious and triumphant death, are cut off from all affinity with the world of souls? Have not all human beings, whether still present on earth or already gathered to God, some mutual spiritual affinity? If we know that every created atom has certain real affinities with every other atom, must we not admit that every free and intelligent spirit has necessarily some affinity with every other free and intelligent spirit? Is it not time that we should comprehend scientifically that, through love alone, spiritual affinity is established? Does not St. Paul give utterance to the most beautiful truth in reference to this subject, when he writes to those whom he loves: "I have you in my heart: *Eo quod habeam vos in corde*?"* And does he differ in this from

* Philippians i. 7.

Christ, who said : " He that loveth Me remaineth in Me, and I in him—*In me manet, et ego in eo ?*"

Do we not find in all real love tangible facts which confirm this eternal law of life ? When, therefore, St. Paul was able to say in reality and truth, "*I bear within me the life of Christ,*" did he not express the highest degree of the experimental knowledge of Christ, feeling, in the midst of his personal life, the true life of Jesus, and seeing this divine life become so fully the ruler and regenerator of his own life, that he exclaims, "*I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me !*"

But we must not imagine that this experience was confined to St. Paul. It was promised by Jesus Christ to each and every one of us.

Even to this day, in His Testament, He summons us all, you and me, and desires us to approach Him. *Come to Me, all you who labour and are burdened, and you shall find rest for your souls.*" Do not these words resound throughout all time ? Is He not therein present, more living, more beloved than ever ? Does He not say in that royal and divine

Testament, bequeathed to all generations of mankind, "*Have courage, for I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world?*"

What view do you take of the supreme institution of His love—the Eucharist? Do you not see, you who have thought deeply on the mysteries of life, you whose feelings are not worn out, and who prefer facts to theories, do you not see that there can and must be a meaning in all the striking energetic words addressed to us by the greatest, the mightiest, and the wisest of Masters?

Listen to the Gospel. "*Jesus stood, and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink.*" John vii. 37.

"*He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.*" John vi. 54.

"*As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me.*" John vi. 57, 58.

Jesus clearly meant to institute communion between Himself and other men; real communion in His life, His flesh, His blood, His soul, and His divinity.

Now, there is a positive experience of communion with Christ, which admits of no illusion. It does not relate to visions, revelations, or ecstasies, which are here out of the question. For, in an increasing perception of duty, a growing strength in its accomplishment, and a simple turning of the heart towards heavenly things, in a vigorous faith, an active charity, a love of justice and of truth, of sobriety, temperance, continence, humility, and labour for suffering humanity, there can be no illusion. He who possesses these bears Jesus within him. When I receive, in the Holy Communion of Christ, the miraculous strength which radically transforms my low, base, and sensual nature, that nature which, left to itself, seeks only its own gratification; I know well that it is not I who effect the change, but Christ Himself.

"It is the Lord!" *Dominus est*, exclaimed St. John, on seeing the miraculous draught of fishes. This is the miraculous life, manifestly different from any ordinary life. This is the miraculous strength, superior to the ordinary strength of man and of nature, in which a poor

child of humanity can say, in Jesus Christ: "If I detach myself from the earth; if I rise above this world in Jesus Christ, I shall have strength to raise the clay of which I am formed even to heights of virtue, and to guide it to its eternal destiny."

And nations also may have an experimental certainty of the dwelling of our Lord Jesus Christ within them, when, instead of falling into falsehood, luxury, and injustice, into anarchy and slavery, into animal sensuality, selfishness, impiety, and the oppression and extermination of the weak, they find themselves, through the influence of Christianity, gradually shaking off the trammels of earth, growing in the love of God, and in the practice of truth, mercy, and justice, endeavouring, in fine, to realize that advanced state of progress, which, in the beginning of this century, appeared so attainable, so natural, and so assured, but which now seems beyond our reach.

But let us praise God while we recollect, that what is beyond the reach of man is possible to Him, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is with us now, and all days,

and even to the consummation of the world. *Ecce ego vobiscum sum, omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem sæculi.**

My enthusiasm must be excused. The real, living, present truth, brought into the world by Jesus Christ, is more beautiful than any poetry. I have the right to admire and love it.

Let no one ask: Is this criticism? I reply that, having recapitulated the present state of criticism, and found, as learned Germany affirms at the present day, in the words of the rationalists, that "every new investigation, each additional step in science, serves but to demonstrate more plainly the wonderful perfection, and the divine inspiration of the Christ,"† I claim the right, in virtue of this scientific result, to maintain that the Gospel has triumphed scientifically; and this will be made clear when the human mind shall awaken from the dark sleep of the present age, to renewed faith and happiness.

* Matt. xxviii. 20.

† Ewald.

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It is time that we should awaken. It is time that philosophy, that is to say, the search after science as a whole, and the love of undivided truth, should spring up once more in Europe!

See whither the spirit of the age is tending. Consider, once more, the phenomenon which now astonishes us, the revival, in our day, of the spirit of the ancient sophists, labouring, after a lapse of two thousand years, to destroy the reason and warp the minds of men.

Read the sophistical maxims, lately presented for the perusal and condemnation of all rational beings.*

Study these attentively. Acknowledge that you did not suspect the depth of the abyss, and understand that it is full time that the indignation of upright minds should disperse this darkness, and call once more for the light of day.

* See "*Les Sophistes et la Critique*," 1st Book. Also the Appendix.

